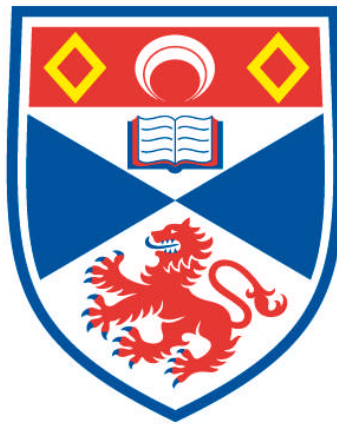


**STUDIES IN JEWISH EXEGESIS OF THE BOOK OF RUTH  
FROM THE ANCIENT VERSION TO THE MEDIAEVAL  
COMMENTARIES**

**Derek Robert George Beattie**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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STUDIES IN JEWISH EXEGESIS OF THE BOOK OF RUTH  
FROM THE ANCIENT VERSIONS  
TO THE MEDIAEVAL COMMENTARIES

by

D.R.G. Beattie



A Thesis submitted to the University of St. Andrews

1972

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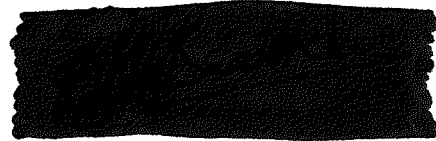
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## STATEMENT AND DECLARATION

On 1st October 1968 I was admitted under Ordinance General no. 12 as a research student in the University of St. Andrews and for a period of twelve terms thereafter I prosecuted research in Jewish exegesis of the book of Ruth. The results of this research are embodied in the thesis which follows and which is now submitted in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own composition and that it has not previously been submitted in application for a higher degree.

A large, solid black rectangular redaction mark covering the signature area of the document.

D.R.G. Beattie

## CERTIFICATE

I certify that DEREK ROBERT GEORGE BEATTIE has been duly admitted as a research student in the University of St. Andrews, that he has fulfilled the conditions of the Ordinance and Regulations, and that he is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

...

William McKane  
Professor of Hebrew and  
Oriental Languages.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The thanks of the writer are due and are hereby gratefully tendered to all those who have assisted him in his study and in the preparation of this thesis. Especial thanks are due to Professor William McKane for his supervision, his criticism, his encouragement and his continual interest; to Mr Robin Salters for checking references at St. Andrews while the writer was at Aberdeen; to Professor A. Diverres of the Department of French and Dr J. Cummings of the Department of Spanish in the University of Aberdeen for their assistance with the glosses in the mediaeval commentaries; to Mrs Joyce Brown for typing the thesis and, finally, to the writer's wife, Sonia, for her encouragement in the latter stages of the work and her practical assistance in the compilation of the index.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AJSL</u>	<u>American Journal of Semitic Languages</u>
<u>ATD</u>	<u>Das Alte Testament Deutsch</u>
B.B.	Baba Bathra
Ber.	Berakoth
BH3	R. Kittel (ed.), <u>Biblia Hebraica</u> 3rd edition.
<u>BK</u>	<u>Biblischer Kommentar</u>
B.M.	Baba Mezia
B.Q.	Baba Qama
Erub.	'Erubin
Git.	Gittin
Hag.	Hagigah
Hor.	Horayoth
<u>HKAT</u>	<u>Handkommentar zum Alten Testament</u>
<u>HTR</u>	<u>Harvard Theological Review</u>
Hul	Hullin
<u>JBL</u>	<u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u>
<u>JE</u>	<u>The Jewish Encyclopaedia</u> , New York and London, 1901-06
<u>JQR</u>	<u>Jewish Quarterly Review</u>
<u>KAT</u>	<u>Kommentar zum Alten Testament</u>
Ket.	Kethuboth
<u>KHAT</u>	<u>Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament</u>
Makk.	Makkoth
<u>MG</u>	<u>Miqra'ot Gedolot</u>
MT	Masoretic Text
Naz.	Nazir
Ruth R.	Ruth Rabbah
Ruth Z.	Ruth Zuta
San.	Sanhedrin
Shab.	Shabbath

Sot.	Sotah
Taan.	Ta'anith
<u>ThZ</u>	<u>Theologische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>TSK</u>	<u>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</u>
<u>VT</u>	<u>Vetus Testamentum</u>
Yeb.	Yebamoth

## INTRODUCTION

The position of the book of Ruth in the arrangement of the Hebrew Bible, among the megilloth or festival scrolls, reflects its liturgical use in Judaism. The scrolls are arranged in the order Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, and this arrangement is based on the order in which the festivals at which the megilloth are read occur in the course of the year. The Song of Songs is read at Passover, Ruth at the Feast of Shavuoth or Pentecost, Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab, Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Tabernacles or Succoth and Esther at the Feast of Purim. It has been suggested that the reading of Ruth at Shavuoth was instituted in commemoration of the death of King David<sup>1</sup> - "King David died on a Pentecost which coincided with the Sabbath"<sup>2</sup> - but the more probable reason is that the story deals with events which took place at the time of the barley and wheat harvests, which the feast of Shavuoth celebrates.

An older arrangement of the biblical books, in which Ruth preceded Psalms at the beginning of the Writings, is described in the Babylonian Talmud (B.B. 14b), this arrangement being based on the supposed chronological order of composition of the books of the Hagiographa. Thus Ruth, composed by Samuel, comes first and is followed by the Psalms of David, the Wisdom books of Solomon (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs), Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles.

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1. S. Zeitlin, "The Five Megilloth", JQR LX (1969-70) p.80.
  2. Ruth R. III 2.

The book of Job was placed between Psalms and Proverbs although it was believed to have been written by Moses. The reason for this, it was explained, is that Job is a record of suffering and therefore not suitable as a beginning to the Writings.

A third arrangement is that which originated in Palestinian tradition and which is preserved in Kittel's Biblia Hebraica, from the 3rd edition onwards, following the order found in MS B 19<sup>A</sup> of the Leningrad Public Library, now commonly known as MS L. In this arrangement the five megilloth are grouped together in the order Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, and this arrangement, too, represents the supposed chronological order of the scrolls' composition. A fourth arrangement is that found in the Septuagint, where Ruth is placed immediately after the book of Judges, alongside the other books traditionally attributed to Samuel.<sup>1</sup> Thus, three of these four arrangements of the Old Testament canon reflect the view that Ruth is an ancient historical document and it is well to mention this at the outset of the present study.

In the period with which this study is concerned the historicity of the events and personages described in Ruth was never in doubt. The story was considered to be an actual record of David's ancestors which had been preserved from early times and this was seen as the primary reason for its existence. Yet the book was also found to have some moral or religious value. Josephus felt constrained to

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1. B.B. 14b: "Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the Book of Judges and Ruth".



include the story in his Jewish Antiquities "to show the power of God and how easy it is for him to promote even ordinary folk to rank so illustrious as that to which he raised David, sprung from such ancestors",<sup>1</sup> and it is recorded in the midrash Ruth Rabbah that R. Ze'ira said "The book of Ruth was written to show how great is the reward of those who do deeds of kindness".<sup>2</sup>

Jewish exegesis of the book in the period with which this study is concerned can be seen to reflect these views. Moralizing comments were attached to, or derived from, the text and various lessons on morality and social behaviour were drawn from the book. Throughout the period, too, not a little interest was displayed in using the book as a source for the study of history and genealogy. Attempts were made to fix the date of the events recounted in Ruth by relating them to events mentioned in the book of Judges. Genealogies were given to those characters in the story who lack them in the biblical text and the genealogy from Perez to David, with which the book of Ruth closes, was used as a means of locating the period of the story in the history of Israel.

The primary interest of Rabbinic exegesis, however, lay in recounting the story and, with this end in view, the chief concern of the Rabbis was to clarify any obscurities and to resolve any difficulties which were found in the biblical text. The simplest methods used for this purpose, and the forerunner of a scientific

- 
1. Josephus, Antiquities V ix 4.
  2. Ruth R. II 14.

exegesis based on the study of grammar and philology, were paraphrase of the text and expansion of the narrative. These methods were widely used by the translators of the Ancient Versions and it is with an examination of these documents that our study begins. The translators of the versions obviously encountered difficulty in their work when they had to translate unusual Hebrew words whose meanings were unclear to them or expressions which would be meaningless if they were represented literally in the language of the translation and it was chiefly in such cases that the versions made use of paraphrase. It should, perhaps, be mentioned here that in the present study the word 'paraphrase' is used in a general sense to describe any departure from literal translation. It need not necessarily imply that circumlocution is involved and it includes expressions which are idiomatic in the receptor language. In other words, idiomatic translation into another language, which is itself an exegetical process, is included, in the present study, in the term 'paraphrase'. The use of this word in this way is based on the premise that it was the policy of the translators of the Ancient Versions to produce a literal representation of the original Hebrew text so far as this was possible. When this proved not to be possible because the meaning of a word or phrase was unclear the translators resorted to circumlocution to express what they felt to be the sense of the passage; where the difficulty lay in the fact that literal translation would prove inadequate or meaningless they employed idiomatic expressions of the language into which they were translating. These two processes are treated together in this study as 'paraphrase'.

Insofar as the methods of paraphrase and simple expansion were employed by the Ancient Translators with a view to conveying the sense of a passage and avoiding misunderstanding of the text they may be viewed as the first stages of the scientific exegesis which began to emerge more fully only in the time of the mediaeval grammarian-exegetes. However, in the interval between the period of the Ancient Versions and that of the mediaeval commentators, Jewish exegesis passed through another stage of development. When narrative-expansion, which originates in paraphrase, passes beyond the stage where it is used to draw out a meaning which seems to be inherent in the original text, to a stage where it includes material which may not be legitimately or logically derived from the original text it becomes haggadah. Our study continues with an examination of the midrashic literature in which this type of exegesis abounds, where questions which may be asked of, but not answered by, the original text are dealt with by this means, and where the haggadah itself, as well as the biblical text, becomes a source for didactic and homiletic use.

Haggadic exegesis is also found in the commentaries written in the Middle Ages which form the terminus ad quem of our study, but in these documents it is recognized for what it is. The fanciful interpretations of the earlier period are clearly distinguished from and give way to a more sober vein of exegesis which is based on grammar and philology. We find rare words and unusual forms explained by means of reference to other occurrences of the same word or similar forms where these exist and we find reference to grammatical principles and appeal to

commonsense and logic employed to show that the conclusions which had been reached by the haggadic process are invalid. We also find that the commentators used techniques of paraphrase and simple narrative-expansion to convey the meaning of the biblical text in a manner similar to that employed by the Ancient Versions, the difference being that the paraphrase is now presented in the mediaeval Hebrew idiom instead of in another language.

This, in brief, is the line of development which we shall trace in the following pages. We begin our study with an examination of the documents which we use as sources of material for the study of Jewish exegesis in the period under consideration. First we examine the Ancient Versions and note their individual characteristics. The Septuagint, the Peshitta and the Targum are each in turn examined and compared with each other and with the Masoretic Text. In this connection the question is raised and considered of the relationship of the Peshitta to the Septuagint on the one hand and to the Masoretic Text on the other. The Peshitta appears to agree in some places with the Hebrew against the Greek and in other places with the Greek against the Hebrew. These points of agreement and disagreement are set out fully below where the problem is discussed in detail. Two versions of the Peshitta's text are compared and some conclusions are drawn from this comparison. That part of Josephus's Jewish Antiquities which relates the story of Ruth is also considered along with the early translations of the Hebrew Bible and then we pass on to examine and describe the documents of the Midrashic literature which form the second group of texts to be examined in our study. The major document from this group of texts to which we refer in

this study is the midrash Ruth Rabbah but we point out that the Targum must be considered a midrashic commentary as well as a version of the biblical text and we refer also to the 'lesser' midrash, Ruth Zuta, and to various parts of the Babylonian Talmud.

The third group of texts which we use as sources for the study of Jewish exegesis of the book of Ruth, and which we have taken as the terminus ad quem of our study, are the commentaries of the mediaeval Rabbis. The concluding section of the first part of our study is devoted to descriptions of the five commentaries which we have examined and of the sources from which they have been obtained. It is to be regretted that it has been necessary to depend on printed sources for the texts of all five commentaries, but it has not been possible to examine any of the manuscripts on which the printed editions are based. The two manuscripts of the commentary attributed to Salmon ben Yercham are both in Leningrad and the manuscript of the Anonymous Rabbi's commentary is in Hamburg, while of manuscript sources for the commentary attributed to David Qimhi nothing, it seems, is known. A critical edition of the commentaries of Rashi and Ibn Ezra, based on as many manuscripts as possible, is already long overdue. This, as well as an examination of the manuscript sources of our other commentaries, is something which must remain to be done on another occasion. Such critical editing as has been possible in view of the nature of our sources has been carried out in the course of the present study and the results of this appear in the descriptions of the commentaries and in the translations and the notes which accompany them.

The second part of our study is devoted to the translation into English of these five mediaeval commentaries. If these translations occupy a large proportion of the complete thesis, this may be said fairly to reflect the time that has been devoted to this task in proportion to the total time which has been spent on this study. The task of translating the commentary attributed to Salmon ben Yeroham alone accounted for a considerable period of time. During this time the text was read and re-read in an attempt to elucidate the more obscure passages and for many hours, in seminars, the combined efforts of all the staff and research students of the St Andrews University Department of Hebrew were brought to bear on the difficulties of the text. For all this, however, the translation will be found to contain several lacunae where the Hebrew text remains stubbornly incomprehensible and attention is drawn to these places in the footnotes. It is possible, and it may be hoped, that some at least of these difficulties may yield to an detailed examination of the manuscripts on which our printed edition is based or, perhaps, to a comparison in detail with the Arabic version of the commentary and its manuscripts, but for the present the difficulties must remain. Happily the texts of the other commentaries are less problematic.

Having described each of our documents in turn and presented this group of them in translation we turn, in the third part of this thesis, to examine the development of exegesis as it is displayed in these documents and as we have briefly outlined it above. We begin by examining the techniques of paraphrase and simple narrative expansion which were employed for exegetical purposes by the translators of the ancient versions and we trace

the development of haggadah from these techniques. We then examine in turn the treatment by the haggadic literature of the story of Ruth and of the characters in it. We also look at the ways in which the story was treated as a historical document and we see how it was used for didactic and homiletic purposes.

Then we consider some of the principles on which the system of haggadic exegesis was based and finally we observe the rise of a scientific system of exegesis which was opposed to the methods and results of the haggadic system and at this point we draw our study to its conclusion.

## Part I.

THE SOURCE DOCUMENTS

## A. THE ANCIENT VERSIONS

## (i) The Septuagint.

The Septuagint translation of the book of Ruth is clearly based on the Masoretic text as we know it, or on a text very similar to it, and so it offers little assistance with the interpretation of those few passages in which the Hebrew text presents difficulty, but it is nonetheless significant for the study of early Jewish exegesis. On the whole it is a literal translation. Indeed it would seem, at times, to have been too slavishly faithful to the Hebrew original as, for example, in those places where the Hebrew infinitive absolute is represented by the Greek participle. Yet, that the translator of the Septuagint had a real understanding of the Hebrew language is made clear by his departure, from time to time, from literalism. He renders the word **אשה** in the expressions **אשה לביח אמה** (i 8) and **אשה ביח אישה** (i 9) as **ἑκάστη**, 'each (woman)', and he uses the negative **μή** to convey the sense of the rhetorical interrogative in i 11, 13. On two occasions (i 18; ii 18), when the Masoretic text uses two finite verbs in sequence the Septuagint represents the first verb by a participle, following the classical Greek construction, though for the most part it is content to follow the Hebrew pattern of using finite verbs in series.



The importance of the Septuagint for the study of exegesis lies mainly in its use of paraphrase to ensure comprehension and in its addition of words or phrases to complement the reading of the Hebrew text. Many examples of these processes will be cited below<sup>1</sup> and it seems unnecessary to duplicate this material here. However, the translation of certain individual words may be worthy of note at this point since they reflect on the procedure followed by the translator.

The rendering of the word **נַעֲרָה** in the two successive sentences of Boaz's question and his servant's reply (ii 5,6) by **νεᾶνις** and **παῖς**, respectively, is perhaps a purely stylistic device of the translator, for no other reason for the variation is apparent. But in the distinction made between the **כַּנָּף** of Yahweh (ii 12), where the Septuagint reads **πτέρυγας**, and the **כַּנָּף** of Boaz (iii 9), which is translated **πετεύχιον**, interpretation clearly has a place in the same way that, in the English versions, the word is rendered 'wing' and 'skirt' respectively.

It is interesting to note that, although the names of all the principal characters in the book have meanings which are relevant to the story, the only name which is translated into Greek is Mara (i 20), which is rendered **Μικράν**. The significance of the name was clearly understood but, one would think, the full significance of the change of name could only

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1. See part III A.

be indicated in another language by the translation of the name Naomi also. The Septuagint translator apparently felt that all the names in the book were to be seen purely as personal names and not as Hebrew words. With one exception he rendered the names by transliteration and these, again with one exception, correspond closely with the forms found in the Masoretic text. The exception is Naomi's husband Elimelech, who is called in the Septuagint Abimelech. The two names are very similar in Hebrew, only one letter being different, and the variant may be purely accidental. There are several Abimelechs in the Old Testament, whereas the name Elimelech occurs only in the book of Ruth, and a scribe might easily write the more common name thinking that that was what he had read.

The text used for this study is the edition of A. Rahlfs.<sup>1</sup>

(ii) The Peshitta.

The Peshitta, unlike the Septuagint, is a free translation but the importance of the Syriac version, like that of the Greek, for the study of early exegesis lies in its use of paraphrase and simple narrative expansion.

There are many points of similarity between the two versions but the relationship between them cannot easily be defined. In both translations the numeral 'two' is omitted in i 1,8, and in i 5 the order of 'her two sons and her husband' (so MT) is reversed in both versions. Both Greek and Syriac read 'they

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1. A. Rahlfs (ed.), Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece juxta 70 interpretes. Stuttgart, (1935) 8th edition 1965.

heard' for MT's 'she heard' (i 6); both omit 'tonight' (i 12), and add 'you, too' after 'go back' (i 15). Both add 'Naomi' as the subject of the verb 'she saw' (i 18) and both take ענה (i 21) in the sense 'afflict', apparently having construed it as Piel rather than Qal, with the meaning 'testify', as in the Hebrew text. Where MT has two verbs in ii 3 (וּחִלַּךְ וַחֲבוּא) the Septuagint and Peshitta have only one, reading 'she went', and where, in the Hebrew text, Boaz says to Ruth "Have I not commanded ... " (ii 9) the Greek and Syriac together make him say "Behold, I have commanded ...". Both translations read 'I will be' for the Hebrew 'I am not' (ii 13); both read 'to her mother-in-law' where MT has 'the Moabite' (ii 21) and both have 'tribe' for the Hebrew's 'gate' (iii 11; iv 10). The coincidence of the particles δε / דִּי (i 14, 18; iii 13) and γάρ / גַּר (iii 11, 18) may also be noted.

The fact that so many similarities may be found must point to some sort of positive connection between the two versions. While taking note of Gerleman's warning that it is not easy to reduce the relationship to a simple formula,<sup>1</sup> one might be inclined to think that they indicate that the Syriac is a translation from the Greek rather than from the Hebrew. In all the examples cited above the Peshitta agrees with the Septuagint against the Masoretic text, but there are also cases in which the Peshitta agrees with the Hebrew against the

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1. G. Gerleman, "Ruth", Biblischer Kommentar XVIII, Neukirchen 1965, p.3.

Septuagint. Such agreements are seen most clearly in those places where a word or phrase which is omitted by the Septuagint reappears in the Peshitta, such as 'and when they came to Bethlehem' (i 19), 'he drank' and 'she lay down'<sup>1</sup> (iii 7), all of which might have been added to the Syriac text to make it conform to the Hebrew. In addition to these examples the Peshitta may be seen to agree with the Masoretic text against the Septuagint in the order of the words 'eating and drinking' (iii 3) - the Greek has 'drinking and eating' - and in making 'the elders' and 'all the people' speak together (iv 11) - the Greek makes 'the people' say "We are witnesses" and the elders pronounce the blessing on Ruth. The Peshitta's קרי שמה (iv 11) would appear to show dependence on the Hebrew וקרא שם rather than the Greek ἔσται ὄνομα , אלשדי (i 20) is obviously the same as the Hebrew אל שדי (LXX - ὁ ἰανός) and the forms of the names in the concluding genealogy (iv 18-22) are, in the Peshitta, closer to those in the Masoretic text than they are to those in the Septuagint.

It may be observed that in the notoriously difficult second part of ii 7 the Peshitta shows no evidence of dependence on the Septuagint: it reads 'she has been gleaning since early morning even until the rest-period', while the Greek has 'she has not rested in the field a little'. This text alone would seem to demonstrate that not only did the Peshitta's translator not use the Septuagint as his original but also that he did not turn

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1. The Peshitta actually reads 'she fell at his feet', which is not precisely equivalent to the Hebrew.

to it for assistance when he found the Hebrew difficult. It shows, too, as do the points of agreement with the Masoretic text listed above, that if the Peshitta was originally translated from the Hebrew and revised on the basis of the Greek the revision was not a thorough one.

We may notice a similar situation in respect of the phrase **פלני אלמני** (iv 1), which the Septuagint translated **κρυφιε**, 'O hidden one', presumably following the Rabbinic view, which we find expressed in a later age,<sup>1</sup> that **פלני** should be derived from the root **פלא** which was believed to mean 'to be hidden'. The Peshitta apparently did not understand the phrase for it reads 'and he said to him "What is it?"'.

A curious phenomenon occurs in iii 15, where the Masoretic text has two verbs - 'bring' and 'hold out'; the Septuagint and Peshitta each translates only one of them, the Greek having 'bring' and the Syriac 'hold out', and in this case the Peshitta shows no sign of acquaintance with the Septuagint. We may also note, in passing, that there are indications in the texts of the two versions of parallel, though independent, development. In ii 5,6, where the Septuagint employs two different words (**νεανις** and **παῖς**) to translate one Hebrew word (**נערה**), the Peshitta also uses two words (**עלימחא** and **אנחחא**); both versions use an equivalent word ('young woman'), which is also a good representation of the Hebrew, in the first place but not in the

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1. See below p. 293f.

second ('child', 'woman'). Both versions expand the text in i 14,15. In the former verse, where 'Orpah kissed her mother-in-law' the Septuagint adds 'and turned back to her people', the Peshitta 'and turned and went'. In the latter verse, where the Hebrew reads simply 'and she said', the Greek has 'and Naomi said to Ruth', while the Syriac has 'her mother-in-law said to her'.

The Peshitta has a dual translation for part of i 13: the first part - 'it is very bitter to me concerning you' - is equivalent to the Septuagint's translation, while the second part is the precise Syriac equivalent of the Hebrew **מר לי מאד מכם**. Gerleman suggests that the second part is the original Syriac translation and the first part has been added from the Greek as part of a revision of the Peshitta on the basis of the Septuagint.<sup>1</sup> This view may well be correct, but it might be just as reasonable to conclude that the first part is the older and the second the addition. In a Jewish context it is likely that a translation based on the Greek version would be revised to make it conform with the original Hebrew, but the converse is possible in a Christian context. Christian influence is, perhaps, to be detected in the Peshitta's version of iv 6 - 'I cannot redeem ... on account of my own scant faith'.

The nature of the Syriac text, which is a free translation, makes it difficult even to gain a general impression of what was the language - whether Greek or Hebrew - of the original from

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1. G. Gerleman, op. cit. p.4.

which the translation was made, particularly since the Septuagint is itself a fairly literal translation. To summarize the above discussion it may be said that there is strong statistical evidence of the Peshitta's dependence on the Septuagint but weighty arguments attach to a few cases where the Syriac reflects the Hebrew text rather than the Greek. The conclusion would seem to follow from this that the Peshitta must originally have been translated from the Hebrew and subsequently revised, though not thoroughly, on the basis of the Septuagint, but the problem is, as it has already been observed, a difficult one and this does not pretend to be a final solution.

For the text of the Peshitta the edition of S. Lee<sup>1</sup> and the Codex Ambrosianus<sup>2</sup> have been used. There is a great number of differences between the two texts but these are, for the most part, of an orthographic nature and it must be said that in all the cases cited above the two texts are in agreement.

Thirteen times, in comparison with Lee, Ambrosianus omits a final yudh of the feminine ending, ten times from second person singular verbs,<sup>3</sup> once from a third person singular verb,<sup>4</sup> and once from the personal pronoun of the second person singular,<sup>5</sup>

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1. S. Lee (ed.), Vetus Testamentum Syriace, London, 1823.
  2. A.M. Ceriani (ed.), Translatio Syra Peshitto Veteris Testamenti ex codice Ambrosiano, Milan 1876-78.
  3. Reading: אחית (ii 11,12); הויח (ii 11,19); אכול (ii 14); דבקח (ii 22); אצטבח and חות (iii 3); אטאבח (iii 10) and דמך (iii 13).
  4. Reading: אמר (iv 17).
  5. Reading: אנה (iii 16).

while in one place it adds, erroneously, a yudh to a third person feminine singular verbal form.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand Lee's text once omits, in relation to Ambrosianus, the yudh of a second person feminine singular verb,<sup>2</sup> and once it omits a taw,<sup>3</sup> producing a masculine verb in the third person singular instead of the feminine form which is correct in the context and which appears in Ambrosianus.

In two places Ambrosianus uses masculine forms<sup>4</sup> where feminine forms are required by the context and appear in Lee, and there are various forms in Ambrosianus which must be interpreted as errors of spelling.<sup>5</sup> Two orthographic curiosities in Ambrosianus must be noted: Ruth's name is written with a prosthetic alaph ( ארעוה ) in iv 5 and in the superscription and concluding notice, while elsewhere it is written in the usual Syriac form ( רעוה ), and in ii 1,3, Naomi's husband is called אבימלך, which is the name given to him in the Septuagint, while elsewhere he is אלימלך, as in Lee's version. This was not mentioned above in connection with the problem of the relationship between the Septuagint and the Peshitta because it need indicate

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1. Reading: טאבחי (iv 15).
  2. Reading: אולה (iii 10).
  3. Reading: ונשק (i 14).
  4. שמעו (i 6); אנהוך (i 21).
  5. חסדא ( sing.) for כללחה (pl.) (i 7,8);  
for חצדא (i 22); מוביחא for מואביחא (ii 6);  
בויחי for הויחי (ii 8) and a root זהא for צהא  
(ii 9).



nothing more than an error by an individual scribe.

In eleven cases a word is written plene in one version defectively in the other; in five of these cases the spelling is plene in Ambrosianus and defective in Lee,<sup>1</sup> while in six the reverse is true.<sup>2</sup>

There is also a number of variations in wording between the two texts and many of these variants represent equally acceptable alternative renderings of the Hebrew as, for example, in the two cases where Lee's text uses a present tense or participle construction while Ambrosianus has a perfect tense,<sup>3</sup> or when a noun appears in the emphatic form in Lee's text and the absolute in Ambrosianus.<sup>4</sup> In the former example Ambrosianus may be observed to correspond more precisely to the Hebrew text than does Lee and there are many more places in which the same

1. כל / כולה (i 19); ירבון / יארבון (i 13);  
מטול / מטבחי and אטבח / מיא / מאיא (ii 9);  
מסל (iii 10).
2. איסראיל / טבכי / טאבכי (iii 9); טבה / טאבה (ii 5);  
מסנה / מסאנה (iv 7); איסריל (iv 7(twice), 14);  
If the three occurrences (iv 17, 21, 22) of the name עובד (Lee) / עוביד (Amb.) are also considered, the number of plene spellings in Lee, in relation to Ambrosianus, rises to nine.
3. אנהי / אנהי (Lee): זהיה (Amb.) - with ז for צ (ii 9);  
אמרא אנהי (Lee): אמרה (Amb.) (iii 5).
4. גברין (Lee): גברין (Amb.) (iv 2).

observation may be made;<sup>1</sup> even though this is not exclusively the case,<sup>2</sup> it would seem that Lee's edition represents a later development of the Syriac version while Ambrosianus is a relatively purer text in terms of its relation to the Hebrew.

Support for this suggestion may be found in two places: one is ii 14, where Boaz tells Ruth to dip her piece of bread in vinegar (חמץ); Lee's version reads 'in milk' (בחלב) which can hardly be explained as a paraphrase of the Hebrew. Ambrosianus reads בחלא ('in vinegar') and so it seems clear that the reading in Lee's text has arisen probably as the result of a mis-reading after the translation into Syriac. The other place where a development within the Syriac tradition is apparent is iii 7: טאב לה (Lee) might be taken simply as a paraphrase for טוב לכו, but it is perhaps more probable that it has developed, within the Syriac tradition, from the literal translation טאב לכה. Ambrosianus has טאב לבא, which, if it is not precisely identical to the Hebrew, at least retains the word לב.

The view that Lee's text represents a degeneration of the original Syriac translation may also be supported by reference to five passages in which the text of Ambrosianus contains material which does not appear in Lee's version. In every case this

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1. As, for example, אנתחא (= Heb. אשחור): Lee has אנתחא (i 2); בחר חצודא (MT אחר הקוצרים): Lee has בחר (ii 7); ואדע (= MT (Kethibh) ואדע): Lee has ואודע (iv 4).
  2. ואכלח (Lee) is closer to the Hebrew ואכולי מן לחמא than is ואכול עמי לחמא (Amb.).

additional material in Ambrosianus represents the reading of the Masoretic text and it would appear that this material was included in the original Syriac version but dropped out at a later date.

Lee's omission of the name 'Boaz' from iv 13, leaving the verb **נסבה** without a separate subject and his omission of the words 'all that belonged to Elimelech and' before 'all that belonged to Mahlon and Chilion' in iv 9 are probably to be attributed purely to the carelessness of a copyist. Similarly, the omission in toto of ii 16 (MT) from Lee's version<sup>1</sup> may have resulted from its similarity, in the Syriac translation, to the latter part of ii 15.<sup>2</sup>

The two remaining places in which Lee's version omits material which appears in both Ambrosianus and the Masoretic text must also be mentioned here. These are iii 13, where Lee's version makes no attempt to report the phrase **ח'י' הוה**, and iv 16, where the words 'and she laid him on her breast' are omitted. It is suggested elsewhere<sup>3</sup> that these phrases were omitted deliberately, the former out of reverence for the divine name and the latter from a reticence of reference to the female anatomy. If this suggestion is to be accepted, Codex Ambrosianus would show

1. In consequence of this, ii 15 (MT) is divided, in Lee's version, into two parts, thus maintaining the numerical sequence.
2. Ambrosianus's version of ii 16 reads: **ושבקה לקטא**  
 - **חלקוטי** ii 15b ( Lee's ii 16) reads: **חלקוטי**  
**מן בינת כפא ולא חהרויה.**
3. See below p.213f.

that such motives were at work within the Syriac tradition, for Ambrosianus includes both of these phrases in its text.

It must be said that it is not intended to suggest that the version of the Peshitta edited by Lee has developed out of the Codex Ambrosianus as such, but only that the latter represents an earlier stage of the Syriac version, a stage nearer to the original from which the translation was made, than the former. Indeed, one piece of evidence may be introduced here to show that both texts have developed separately. In two places where the Peshitta incorporates additional words in its text for the purpose of clarifying its meaning the two versions use words which are different, though of similar meaning,<sup>1</sup> which suggests that such additions were not made at the time of the translation but were incorporated at a later stage in the transmission of the text and independently of each other.

(iii) The Targum.

Of the Targums on the five megilloth it has been said that "they can scarcely be called Targums in the ordinary sense; they are picturesque commentaries".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Targum on Ruth must be included with the Ancient Versions as a source of Jewish

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1. In i 9 Lee adds חסדא and Ambrosianus רחמא as an object of יחן יהוה; at the end of i 18 Lee adds למחפך, Ambrosianus למאזל.
  2. W.O.E. Oesterley and G.H. Box, A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinical and Mediaeval Judaism, London 1920, p.56.

exegesis. While the work in its finished form may be viewed as a midrash rather than a version, the 'commentary' is interwoven with the words of the text to produce a greatly expanded version of the biblical story more than twice as long as the original, and the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew may be seen clearly between the comments. This Aramaic translation is based firmly on the Masoretic text as we know it and, on the whole, the rendering is faithful with few variations, though paraphrase is at times employed, notably in the circumlocutions which are used in reference to God, particularly where the divine name is involved, following the accepted traditions of the Targumists. As is the case with the Septuagint and the Peshitta, it is largely in its use of paraphrase and simple expansion of the narrative that the value of the Targum, as a version, for the study of Jewish exegesis lies. It may be observed that only once does the Targum omit a passage of the Hebrew text - 'and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah' (i 7b) - but no reason, other than accident, for this omission is apparent.

For the Aramaic text the editions of Wright<sup>1</sup> and Sperber<sup>2</sup> have been compared. The differences between the two texts are almost all orthographic, Sperber's text being unpointed; quotations used in this study follow Wright's orthography. An English translation of the Targum has been published by A. Saarisalo.<sup>3</sup>

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1. C.H.H. Wright, The Book of Ruth in Hebrew and Chaldee, London 1864.
  2. A. Sperber, The Bible in Aramaic, vol. IV A The Hagiographa, Leiden 1968.
  3. A. Saarisalo, "The Targum to the book of Ruth", Studia Orientalia II (1928) pp.88-104.

## (iv) Josephus.

The date of composition of Josephus's "Jewish Antiquities" - the latter part of the first Christian century - warrants its inclusion along with the Ancient Versions as a source for the study of early biblical exegesis. The story of Ruth is recorded in Book V chapter ix, and is a paraphrase rather than a translation of the biblical narrative. It is not clear whether the original text used by the author was a Hebrew or a Greek version; Thackeray, who found that Josephus used a Semitic text for the Pentateuch and a Greek text for the historical books from Samuel onwards, found "no certain evidence for the use of a Greek text" for Joshua, Judges and Ruth.<sup>1</sup> It may be mentioned that Josephus uses the name Abimelech, and not Elimelech, for Naomi's husband, but the present writer would not attach too much importance to this point of agreement with the Septuagint. However, the fact that Josephus dates the story in the period when Eli was high priest may indicate that he was familiar with the Septuagint's arrangement of the canon, in which the book of Ruth is placed immediately before the story of Samuel where Eli appears as an old man. Like the versions, Josephus incorporates in his story various bits of narrative embroidery, examples of which will be cited below,<sup>2</sup> and his account is generally in tune with the exegesis of early Rabbinic Judaism.

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1. H.St J. Thackeray, Josephus the Man and the Historian, New York 1929, p.81.

2. See especially p. 215f.

The text used for this study is the edition of H.St J. Thackeray in the 'Loeb Classical Library' series<sup>1</sup> and quotations are taken from Thackeray's English translation, which is published in that edition.

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1. H.St J. Thackeray and R. Marcus, Josephus V, London and Cambridge, Mass., 1934, pp.142-151.

## B. THE MIDRASHIC LITERATURE

### (i) The Targum.

The Targum must be mentioned again under this heading since it contains, in addition to its Aramaic translation of the biblical book of Ruth, a considerable quantity of haggadic material. From the manner in which this haggadic material is woven into the narrative of the story a special insight may be gained into the ways in which this style of exegesis developed; the points at which it was clearly felt that some form of exegetical comment was needed, as well as the way in which these needs were met, are clearly marked by the Targum's departure from faithful translation of the Hebrew text.

### (ii) Ruth Rabbah.

Along with the Targum this is the principal source used in this study to represent the exegesis of the midrashic literature. A product of the Palestinian academies - the great majority of the Rabbis whose comments are collected here are Palestinian Tannaim and Amoraim - the exact date of its compilation is not easily ascertained. This can only be given approximately, in terms of its relationship to the other commentaries on the Pentateuch and the Megilloth which are called collectively the Midrash Rabbah. Rabinowitz assigns to Ruth Rabbah "an intermediate position between the older Midrashim such as Genesis Rabbah, Leviticus Rabbah and Ekah Rabbati, from which much of its material is taken, and the later Midrashim such as



Exodus Rabbah and Deuteronomy Rabbah, of which it is one of the sources".<sup>1</sup> Oesterley and Box<sup>2</sup> date the work "in its present form" in the eleventh or twelfth century C.E., though it was probably compiled some centuries earlier.

Ruth Rabbah opens with a lengthy introduction in seven parts, six of which are devoted to the homiletic exposition of texts extraneous to the book of Ruth, the seventh to the thesis that the expression 'ה' is used regularly in the Hebrew Bible to introduce a period of trouble. The commentary itself is divided into eight chapters, of which the first and last deal with the first and last two verses of the biblical book respectively, while the remainder of the book is divided among the other six chapters. Chapters II - VI are introduced by expositions on extraneous verses, often taken from Chronicles, which book, according to the Rabbis, was written only for purposes of midrashic interpretation.<sup>3</sup> This kind of material, which is by no means confined to the places mentioned and which has little direct relevance to the exegesis of Ruth, has been largely ignored in this study.

The exegetical material in Ruth Rabbah is similar in many respects to that found in the Targum and comparison may be made at many points. The two works followed a similar system of exegesis but often obtained slightly different results. These

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1. L. Rabinowitz, Ruth Rabbah, The Midrash VIII, London 1939, p.vii.
  2. W.O.E. Oesterley and G.H. Box, A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinical and Mediaeval Judaism, London 1920, p.74.
  3. Ruth R. II 1.

differences may be attributed, at least in part, to the different viewpoints of the Palestinian and Babylonian academies as represented by the midrash and the Targum respectively. Differences may also be partly explained by the different natures of the two works. The Targum is, in its form, essentially a version, a translation of the Hebrew text, with comments interwoven with the translation, while the midrash is a commentary which permits discussion of points raised and the inclusion of more than one interpretation.

For the Hebrew text of Ruth Rabbah the edition published at Ostrog in (5)599 (= 1838-9) has been used. The English translation of L. Rabinowitz, published by the Soncino Press (London, 1939), has also been found useful. The conventional abbreviation Ruth R. is used hereafter and references in Roman and Arabic numerals relate to the chapter and section divisions, respectively, in Rabinowitz's translation; this has been found convenient since the individual sections, within the chapters, are not numbered in the Hebrew text used. Quotations, unless otherwise specified, are taken from Rabinowitz's English version.

(iii) Ruth Zuta.

An edition of the Midrash Zuta on the Megilloth, edited by S. Buber, was published at Berlin in 1894; the second edition (Wilna, 1925) has been examined for the purpose of the present study. The origin of this work is very obscure; its title marks it as a minor counterpart to the Midrash Rabbah. It is quite short and its comments are arranged according to the

chapter and verse enumeration of the Hebrew Bible. Consequently, the citation of specific references for quotations, is frequently found to be unnecessary.

(iv) The Talmud.

The Babylonian Talmud has also, inevitably, been consulted and reference will be made frequently in the following pages to its tractates although, needless to say, this work has not been studied exhaustively. Much of the haggadic material which appears in the Targum and Ruth Rabbah is also to be found in the Talmud though, perhaps, in a slightly different form. When the two former texts disagree the Talmud is frequently found to support the Targum, thus demonstrating that at least some of the differences between the Targum and Midrash probably reflect the differing viewpoints of Babylonian and Palestinian scholars.

The Talmud was an important source for the mediaeval commentators who cited from it the opinions of earlier scholars. Since they frequently quoted verbatim their quotations may often be identified with precision.

In this study quotations follow the English translations of the Soncino Talmud<sup>1</sup> and the conventional means of reference - folio numbers, with a and b to indicate recto and verso, respectively - are employed.

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1. I. Epstein, (ed.), The Babylonian Talmud, London 1935-48.

## C. THE MEDIAEVAL COMMENTARIES

## (i) Salmon ben Yeroham.

The Hebrew form of this tenth century Qaraite scholar's name - שלמון בן ירוחם - has been vocalized in various ways, as Salmon ben Jeruchim,<sup>1</sup> Selman ben Jeruhim<sup>2</sup> and Solomon ben Jeroham.<sup>3</sup> The form Salmon ben Yeroham has been adopted here because it appears to represent the pronunciation known to the composer of the superscription to the commentary attributed to him, in which the patronymic is rhymed with שֶׁהָם; onyx: in Arabic his name is Suleiman ibn Ruhaim.

Salmon ben Yeroham lived in Jerusalem and wrote in the period 940-960. Commentaries by him on the Song of Songs, Lamentations and Qoheleth, all written in Arabic, are extant as, too, are a Hebrew version of his polemic against Saadya and an Arabic translation of Qaraite prayers. The Hebrew text of the commentary on Ruth attributed to him, which is translated into English below, was edited by I.D. Markon<sup>4</sup> from two manuscripts in the Leningrad Public Library: MS no. 583/4 of the First Firkovich collection and MS no. 78 of the Second Firkovich collection. Markon refers to these manuscripts as 'A' and 'B' respectively

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1. P. Kahle, The Cairo Geniza, (2nd edition) London, 1959, p.27.
  2. ibid. p.80.
  3. K. Kohler, "Karaites", JE vii pp.438-447.
  4. I.D. Markon, פירוש על מגלת רות להקראי שלמון בן ירוחם Livre d'hommage à la mémoire du Dr. Samuel Poznański, Warsaw 1927, Hebrew section pp.78-96.

and this system of reference has been maintained in the present study. MS 'A', which Markon dates approximately in the eighteenth century, contains, in addition to the commentary on Ruth, a commentary on Ps. 110 and the beginning of a commentary on Esther. MS 'B' is "old and in many places worn through age"; it contains the commentaries on Ruth, Esther and Lamentations but all three commentaries are, in some degree, defective. These commentaries are translations from Arabic originals and the work of translation was probably done in Greece, for several Greek words are employed in them. Markon suggests that the translation was made in the twelfth century "by one of the disciples, or one of the disciples of the disciples of the well-known Qaraite Jeshua ben Jehudah, who were in Greece".<sup>1</sup>

Salmon ben Yeroḥam's authorship of the commentary on Ruth has been challenged by Nemoy, who found it to be "identical with the tafsir of Yefeth ben Ali".<sup>2</sup> Also known as Japheth ben Eli or, in Arabic, Abu Ali al Hasan ibn Ali al Basri, Yefeth ben Ali flourished in the last quarter of the tenth century, about a generation after Salmon ben Yeroḥam, whose younger contemporary he must have been.

An edition of the Arabic text of Yefeth's commentary on the first two chapters of Ruth has been published<sup>3</sup> and translated into

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1. The material in this paragraph is drawn from Markon's introduction (in Hebrew) to his edition of the commentary on Ruth, op. cit., pp. 78-80.
  2. L. Nemoy, "Did Salmon ben Yeroḥam compose a commentary on Ruth?" JQR XXXIX (1948) p. 215f.
  3. N. Schorstein, Der Commentar des Karäers Jepheth ben Ali zum Buche Ruth, Berlin 1903.

English by Nemoy<sup>1</sup> and there can be no doubt that it represents the same work as Salmon's Hebrew commentary though, to the present writer, the word 'identical' seems too emphatic. While a detailed comparison of the two texts has not been carried out it is clear that there are points of divergence between them. The general form of the commentaries and the manner in which biblical texts are quoted may be mentioned as examples. In the Arabic version the translation of a complete verse or verses introduces the comment on a particular section of the text while in the Hebrew version only a few words of the biblical text are used as headings to the comments. A similar practice is observed when quotations from other biblical books are introduced: the Arabic translates the complete verse while the Hebrew cites only its opening words which are not necessarily even the part of the verse relevant to the argument.<sup>2</sup> There are also many cases in which material appears in one text but is not represented in the other and places where the two texts disagree; a few examples may be noted.

At the beginning of the commentary the Hebrew text sets out seven lessons, numbered in series, which may be learnt from the book of Ruth, of which the Arabic represents only six and in the latter version the lessons are not numbered. As well as

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1. L. Nemoy, "Karaites Anthology", Yale Judaica Series VII, New Haven 1952, pp.84-107.
  2. Examples of this may be seen notably in the introduction to the Hebrew commentary. See below p.57f.

omitting the seventh lesson, the Arabic text omits the moral which the Hebrew text derives from the story of Orpah (lesson 3 in the series) - 'that a man ought to remain in one path from his youth to the day of his death' - but under point 5, which in the Hebrew text is that we learn something about the laws of levirate marriage, the Arabic version has 'of levirate marriage and redemption'. The fourth lesson of this series in the Hebrew text defies both comprehension and translation but it has nothing in common with its counterpart in the Arabic text, which Nemoj translates 'we learn further from this scroll the customs then prevalent among Israel regarding their behaviour in matters of harvesting and gleaning and in the matter of their servants, as we shall explain when we come to the story of Boaz'. Immediately after this list of general lessons to be learned from Ruth the Arabic version includes an exposition of the commentator's aims, which Nemoj translates thus: 'Having expounded the purposes of this scroll, we shall proceed to expound the meaning of each verse in a concise yet sufficient manner, according to what we have learned from our preceptors and what we have discovered by following the principles of exegesis that they have taught us'. This is without counterpart in the Hebrew text.

That the attribution of the authorship of the Arabic commentary to Yefeth ben Ali is to be accepted as authoritative is based on the fact that one of its manuscripts (B. M. Or 2554) was evidently copied during his own lifetime; he is believed still to have been alive when this manuscript was copied (in A.H. 395 = 1004-5 C.E.) because the eulogy *اللهم* - 'May God fortify him', which is applied only to the living, is there

appended to his name.<sup>1</sup> It was this established fact of Yefeth's authorship of the Arabic version that led Nemoy to the conclusion that the Hebrew version is wrongly attributed to Salmon ben Yeroḥam. The present writer feels, however that the traditional ascription to Salmon ben Yeroḥam may be retained as a convenient method of distinguishing readily between the Hebrew version of the commentary and the Arabic version which is, apparently, indisputably Yefeth's.<sup>2</sup> If we bear in mind the fact that there are significant differences between the two versions the possibility arises that there may be some other explanation of their similarities, for the attribution of the Hebrew commentary to Salmon must be somehow explicable; we cannot, for example, in the present state of our knowledge, rule out the possibility of plagiarism, whether deliberate or unconscious, on the part of Yefeth.

But regardless of its authorship, the commentary on Ruth which is attributed to Salmon ben Yeroḥam is an important document for our study of Jewish exegesis. It is by far the longest of the five commentaries examined for this study and, consequently, it discusses the biblical material in greater detail than do the others. It is also the only document which does not originate

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1. Nemoy, JQR XXXIX (1948) p.215, "Karaites Anthology" p.83; Schorstein, op. cit. p.11.
  2. Consequently, in the present study, references to Yefeth ben Ali relate to the Arabic text, as edited by Schorstein, and/or the English translation by Nemoy; quotations are generally taken from the latter. References to Salmon ben Yeroḥam relate to Markon's edition of the Hebrew text and/or to the English translation of the present writer as given below, pp.57-129.



from the orthodox Rabbinic tradition and some of its views display a radical divergence from those of the mainstream of Rabbinic thought. Since the Qaraites did not accept the authority of the material which had been accumulated in the course of centuries in the Talmud and other Rabbinic literature we find in this commentary a refreshingly original style of exegesis in which the aim is to establish the sensible meaning of the text and for which the sole authority to which appeal may be made is the Biblical text itself. One feels that in a great many cases where a text, in which no apparent difficulty lies, is expounded by means of paraphrase, the author's purpose in making the comment was to oppose the midrashic interpretations put forward by scholars of the orthodox camp, though this is rarely stated.

The subject of levirate marriage was a matter of particular contention between the Qaraites and the Rabbanites and when this subject is touched upon in the commentary on Ruth polemic erupts. Commenting on Naomi's speech (i 11f) about the impossibility of her having further sons who might marry Ruth and Orpah, Salmon castigates the 'ignorant Rabbanites'<sup>1</sup> who interpreted these verses as a reference to levirate marriage despite the fact that in the Mishnah it is specifically stated that a brother-in-law born

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1. These words are used in a comment which has been misplaced after i 13 (see below p.74) but the point is also made at the correct point in the commentary (below p.71).

after the death of his brother is under no obligation to marry his deceased brother's wife. The Qaraite view was that the word 'brother' in the law of levirate marriage (Deut. xxv 5f) could not mean an actual brother of the deceased husband since, if this were the case, it would involve a contravention of the law against incest (Lev. xviii 16). The debate between the Qaraites and the Rabbanites hinged around their respective views on the relationship between the law against incest and the law enjoining levirate marriage. Which of these laws represented the general principle and which the exception to that principle? The Rabbanites held that the law against incest was a general principle and the levirate law a specific exception to this rule, while the Qaraites maintained the opposite point of view. In a lengthy excursus on the laws of levirate marriage and redemption, in his commentary on iv 10, Salmon argues that the law of levirate marriage is presented in Deuteronomy as a general statement while the law against incest is presented in Leviticus as a specific statement of prohibition, "and it is not right to make of a general statement an exception to a specific statement". From this he concludes that 'brother' in Deuteronomy must mean 'a relative' but that actual brothers were not included is made clear by the Leviticus law against incest.

Salmon's commentary is also of interest for the study of the development of exegesis in that he pays considerable attention to matters of Hebrew grammar. The scientific study of Hebrew grammar was still in its infancy in the tenth century and some of Salmon's views on the subject are far from satisfactory; these will be discussed in the appropriate place

below.<sup>1</sup> At this point we must note that in the time of Salmon ben Yeroham biblical exegesis was beginning to move in what we, from our academic point of view, must call the right direction.

(ii) Rashi.

R. Solomon ben Isaac, commonly known and here referred to by the acrostic 'Rashi', was born at Troyes in 1040 and died there on 13th July 1105; he composed commentaries on the whole of the Old Testament and on the Talmud. For the text of his commentary on Ruth four editions of *Miqra'ot Gedolot* have been consulted: Bomberg's 3rd *Biblia Rabbinica* (Venice, 1547-49), the 5th *Biblia Rabbinica* (Venice, 1617-19) and two modern editions, the one published at Warsaw in 1874 and the other at Jerusalem in 1961.

Apart from some minor typographical differences, the text of all four editions is substantially the same, but the modern editions include several passages which do not appear in the earlier editions. In the translation these passages are enclosed in brackets. Two of these (in the commentary on iii 12 and iv 1) are editorial notes which cite manuscript variations and one (in the commentary at i 12) is, perhaps, a restoration of a passage which had been omitted by some manuscripts. It is perhaps noteworthy that most of the remaining additions are, if not actual quotations, at least closely paralleled in the midrash

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1. See p.285ff.

Ruth Rabbah. One might be led to suspect from this that Rashi's commentary may, at some time, have been expanded through the utilization of Ruth Rabbah, but stronger evidence than this would be required if the authenticity of these passages as comments of Rashi were to be questioned. It is clear from other parts of the commentary that Ruth Rabbah was a source used extensively by Rashi in the composition of his commentary. In several places he clearly quotes from it and in other cases his comments, though not precisely quotations, are almost identical to those of this midrash. These places will be pointed out in the notes which accompany the translation.<sup>1</sup>

Another major source for the commentary was the Babylonian Talmud, from which Rashi quotes directly some eight times and which is probably the source of other comments as well. These will also be pointed out below. A particularly interesting example is Rashi's reading between the lines of i 16,17 to produce a dialogue in which Naomi acquaints Ruth with some of the obligations and consequences of conversion to Judaism, which Ruth accepts by saying "Where you go, I will go ..." etc. A similar dialogue is recorded in Yeb. 47b, Ruth Rabbah II 22-24 and the Targum, ad loc., but no two of these accounts are identical. Examination of these four texts (as set out on the following pages) suggests that Rashi's version is based on the Talmudic version. In two of the six parts (d & e) the two versions are

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1. See below Part II B.

## Rashi on Ruth i 16f compared with other texts.

Ruth R.	Targum	Yeb. 47b	Rashi
a) אין דרכן של בנות ישראל לילך לבתי היאטראות ולבתי קירקסיאות של גוים	אחפקדנא למטר שביא ויומי טבא בדיל דלא להלכא בר מחרין אלפיין אמין	אסיר לן חחום שבח	(a) אסור לנו לצאת חוץ לתחום בשבת
It is not the custom of the daughters of Israel to go to the theatres and circuses of the gentiles.	We are commanded to keep Sabbaths and holy days so as not to walk more than two thousand cubits.	We are forbidden the Sabbath limits.	We are forbidden to go abroad beyond the limits on the Sabbath.
b) אין דרכן של ישראל לדור בבית שאיין שם מזוזה	אחפקדנא דלא <sup>1</sup> למבח כחדא עם עממיא	אסיר לן יחוד <sup>1</sup>	(b) אסור לנו להחייחד נקבה עם זכר שאינה אישה
It is not the custom of Israel to dwell in a house which has no mezuzah.	We are forbidden to lodge together with the Gentiles.	We are forbidden to be together. <sup>1</sup>	It is forbidden to us that a female should be alone with a male who is not her husband.

1. The Soncino Talmud translates: "We are forbidden private meeting between man and woman".

	Ruth R.	Targum	Yeb. 47b	Rashi	
c)	אלו עונשין ואזהרות	אתפקדנא למנטר שיח מאה וחלת עסר פקודיא	מפקדינן שש מאות וי"ג מצות	עמנו מובדלים משאר עמים בשש מאות ושלש עשרה מצות	(c)
	This refers to the penalties and admonitions (of the Torah).	We are commanded to keep six hundred and thirteen precepts.	We have been commanded six hundred and 13 commandments.	Our people are distinguished from the rest of the peoples by six hundred and thirteen commandments.	
d)	שאר מצות	אתפקדנא דלא למפלח פולחנא נוכראה	אסיר לן ע"א (ע"ז) (עכו"ם)	אסור לנו (ע"א) (ע"ז) (עכו"ם)	(d)
	(This refers to) the rest of the commandments.	We are commanded not to worship foreign gods.	Idolatry is forbidden to us.	Idolatry is forbidden to us.	
e)	אלו ד' מיתוח ב"ד סקילה שריפה הרג וחנק	איח לנא ארבע דיני מותא לחייביא רגימח אבנא ויקידח נורא וקטילת סיפא וצליבח קיסא	ד' מיתוח נמסרו לב"ד	ארבע מיתוח נמסרו לבית דין	(e)

Ruth R.	Targum	Yeb. 47b	Rashi
This refers to the four capital punishments of the Beth Din, stoning, burning, decapitation and hanging.	We have four kinds of death for the guilty, stoning with stones, burning with fire, execution by the sword and hanging on a gibbet.	4 capital punishments have been entrusted to the Beth Din.	Four capital punishments have been entrusted to the Beth Din.
f) אלו שני קברים המחוקקים לב"ד אחד לנסקלין ולנשרפין ואחד לנהרגין ולנחנקין	איה לנא ביח קבורתא	ב' קברים נמסרו לב"ד	(f) שני קברים נמסרו לביח דין אחד לנסקלין ונשרפין ואחד לנהרגין ונחנקין
Two graves have been prepared by the Beth Din, one for those who have been stoned and burnt and one for those who have been decapitated and strangled.	We have a house of burial.	2 graves have been entrusted to the Beth Din.	Two graves have been entrusted to the Beth Din, one for those stoned and burnt and one for those decapitated and strangled.

identical, except that Rashi wrote in full words for which the Talmud used abbreviations; in two others (a & b) Rashi's version is an expansion of that in the Talmud (which in these cases takes the form of abbreviated notes); one (f) is identical with that of the Talmud, with an addition taken from Ruth Rabbah; the sixth (c) also echoes the Talmud and may be viewed as an expansion on the short note found there. It may also be observed, from this examination of the texts in parallel, that Ruth Rabbah displays its independence of the other texts in four of the six passages while the Targum has, like Rashi, an expansion of the Talmudic version.

Rashi's own contribution to the exegesis of Ruth lies principally in his exposition of the simple meaning of the text. He explains the less familiar words by synonyms, or by pointing to other occurrences, where these exist. Twice he refers to the language of the Mishnah when the word in question does not appear elsewhere in the Old Testament and twice he bases his explanation on the Aramaic translation of the Targums. In one case he translates a word into his contemporary French. We find, too, that his explanations are sometimes based on principles of Hebrew grammar. A notable case is his explanation of חַעֲלֹנָה (i 13) which he derives from the root עֲלָג, reasoning that, if it were a derivative of the root עֲלָג it would be written חַעֲלֹנָה or חַעֲלֹנָה: his reasoning was sound, though it led him to the wrong conclusion. A sound grammatical knowledge is displayed again by his pointing out that שֹׁבָה (i 15; ii 6) is perfect when the accent is on the first syllable and present (or participle)



when the accent is on the second syllable, and that ה pointed with hateph is an interrogative.

The expansion and paraphrase which Rashi uses in several places to express the meaning of a text are probably to be considered part of his own original contribution too. Yet it must be noted that Rashi makes no clear distinction between peshat and derash. In several places his comments are based on the belief that every word of the text, even the order of words in a verse, is significant - a belief which may frequently be seen to lie at the root of midrashic interpretation - and, for a large part of his commentary, Rashi was content to collect and arrange in order the traditional exegesis of earlier generations.

(iii) An Anonymous Rabbi.

In the series of mediaeval Rabbinic commentaries which he edited for publication Jellinek included the one which is here translated and attributed to 'An Anonymous Rabbi'; Jellinek called it 'Commentaries on Ruth by R. Joseph Qara, Rashbam, Dunash, R. Menahem bar Helbo and an unknown man - may their memories be blessed'.<sup>1</sup> The shorter title is employed in the present work not only because the form used by Jellinek is somewhat cumbersome but also because the present writer feels that form to be misleading. Inasmuch as various parts of the commentary are attributed to

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1. פירושים על רוח לר' יוסף קרא לרשב"ם לדונש לר' מנחם בר  
 חלבו ולאיש פלוני in A. Jellinek (ed.), Commentarien zu  
Esther, Ruth und den Klageliedern, Leipzig 1855, pp.23-34.

'R. Joseph' or 'R. Samuel' the complete document, as it now stands, may be viewed as the composite work which Jellinek's title would suggest it is. That such passages are probably actual excerpts from commentaries by these Rabbis is attested by the fact that those passages which, in similar fashion, are attributed to Rashi (whom Jellinek omits to mention in his superscription) are, in fact, excerpts from his complete commentary.<sup>1</sup> But Dunash and Menaham b. Helbo are each cited only once and then not in the same way as the other two rabbis: commenting that **אנין** (i 21) means 'testify', while **אנין** without the preposition **א** means 'answer', the writer adds "and I have found this in Dunash's book", while Menaham bar Helbo's view is cited as support for our commentator's interpretation of the difficult second half of ii 7. Thus it seems hardly fair to cite the four names together, apparently as those of four contributors of equal importance to a composite work.

The commentary should rather be viewed as the work of an anonymous writer who utilized for his composition the works of earlier authorities. Sometimes he quoted verbatim from the commentary of another scholar, in which case he mentions his source at the end of the quotation; when not quoting verbatim he integrated the name of his source in the comment that he wrote, as in the case of his reference to Dunash which has already

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1. Variations do occur between the text of Rashi's commentary in the Rabbinic Bibles and the quotations in this commentary. Attention will be drawn to these variations in the notes to the translation. See below Part II C.

been mentioned. Sometimes he placed two different views side by side without adding an opinion of his own, as when he cited R. Samuel and R. Joseph as believing **הליגה**(i 13) to be a form of the verb **ליג**, while Rashi thought it was derived from **ליי** sometimes he added his own opposing view as when, having cited Rashi's comment that Elimelech was a wealthy man who emigrated to Moab only out of selfishness, he added "but this is not commonsense ( **טפשות** ) ..... it was on account of the famine that he emigrated". All in all, this anonymous writer behaved as we might today expect a commentator to behave.

A notable feature of this commentary is that its style of utilizing quotations allows us to draw conclusions as to the exegetical attitudes of the Rabbis who are quoted. Rashbam - R. Samuel b. Meir (ca. 1085 - ca. 1174), a grandson and pupil of Rashi - emerges as a champion of grammar, while Joseph Qara (1060/70 - 1130/40) - a friend and perhaps also a pupil of Rashi, Jellinek<sup>1</sup> suggests that the surname Qara reflects his adherence to literal interpretation - is shown to have an interest in homiletics. Both of these interests were obviously shared by the man who quoted them.

What more may be said about our anonymous Rabbi? That he was a champion of peshat is shown by his opposition, as has already mentioned, to Rashi's views on Elimelech's emigration. In this connection we may also mention his frequent translation of words and phrases into his French vernacular. He had a

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1. op. cit. p.vi.

characteristic habit of composing lengthy paraphrases in the form of a speech by one of the characters in the story. He is without equal among the commentators whose works have been examined for the present study in naming the sources from which he has drawn material, although it is not always clear what he is attributing to another scholar, for the scholar quoted at the end of one comment may also be the source of the preceding comment if that is not separately identified. Assuming that those sections which are not attributed to someone else are the author's own work, strong resemblances to the work of Rashi may be detected in one or two places: for example, in the comment on שבה (i 15), that the distinction between the past and present tenses is always made clear by the accent, and in the identification of the 'days when the judges were judging' as the time 'before there was a king reigning over the Israelites'. A particular reverence for Rashi's scholarship may be reflected in the fact that once he is called רבי (in full) and twice רבנא<sup>1</sup>, while Joseph Qara and Rashbam are invariably designated by the abbreviation 'ר; three times שלמה is written in full, while the names of the others are always abbreviated.<sup>2</sup>

Jellinek thinks our anonymous Rabbi may have been a pupil

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1. The abbreviation 'ר appears with his name three times.
  2. 'ר 8 times, 'ר יוס' twice; 'ר שמ' 11 times, 'ר שמ' once. Rashi's name is also abbreviated: once to 'של, twice to 'שלמ.

of Rashbam<sup>1</sup> and, to judge from the number of times the latter is cited in the commentary, this seems quite likely. If this were the case it would be understandable that he should show respect for Rashi, who was Rashbam's teacher and grandfather. Jellinek dates the commentary to the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup>

(iv) Abraham ibn Ezra.

Abraham ben Meir ibn Ezra (1092/3 - 1167) wrote commentaries on the Torah, Isaiah, the Twelve Prophets, Psalms, Job, the Megilloth, Daniel and, perhaps, on some of the remaining books of the bible. Commentaries on Proverbs and Ezra - Nehemiah which are attributed to him and printed in the Rabbinic Bibles are, in fact, by Moses Qimhi.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Ezra's commentary on Ruth, like that of Rashi, includes both what we would call scientific exegesis and traditional midrashic material, but he used less of the latter than did Rashi and, when he did use it, he did not use it uncritically. He distinguished clearly between peshat and derash, and in this respect his commentary marks a further stage in the development of exegesis. When quoting traditional material he was careful to distinguish between that with which he agreed and that to which he objected. Twice (on i 3 and iii 15) he introduces

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iv ?

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1. op. cit. p.v.
  2. op. cit. p.vii.
  3. W. Bacher, JE vi p.522.

midrashic interpretations by the phrase "by derash they say ...." and in one place (ii 5) he refers to a midrashic exegesis but does not quote it, saying that it is well-known.

He refers only once to 'our teachers of blessed memory' (on ii 1), apparently accepting their identification of Boaz with the judge Ibzan, and once to 'our sages of blessed memory' (on iv 8), agreeing with their view that Boaz gave his shoe to the redemmer in token payment for his right of redemption. His favourite reference is to 'some who say ...', and if one fault may be found with his commentary it is this imprecision in reference to those with whom he disagreed. In two places (on i 21 and ii 2) a statement thus introduced is followed by his own view prefixed by the phrase 'but my opinion is ....', and in two other places (on iii 13 and iv 8) his own, opposing, view is stated categorically, without this prefix. In the remaining cases where 'some' are cited, one feels that he is suggesting, by the use of this phrase, that the comments so introduced are at best of uncertain value. In other places where he quotes a view with which he does not agree he refers to its proponents as 'many of our colleagues' (on i 11), 'a grammarian' (i 1) or 'the commentator who thinks ....' (iii 4). His own views are stated emphatically in each case but he neglects to mention the names of those with whom he disagrees. He effectively disclaims responsibility for the three-fold interpretation by gematria of כאיפה שעורים (ii 17) by attributing it to 'a man', who insisted on telling him about it.

Only two scholars are mentioned by name - Judah ibn Daud Hayyuj, whom he calls R. Judah (on i 20), and Jonah ibn Janah,

whom he calls R. Jonah the Grammarian (on iii 16) - with both of whom ibn Ezra is in agreement. R. Jonah is mentioned again in the comment on iv 4, where he is represented as suggesting that **לגאל** would give a better reading than does **לגל**. Ibn Ezra disagreed and this passage is unique in the commentary, being the one place where a scholar is named, with whose opinion he did not concur.

It has been suggested that ibn Ezra often quoted from the commentaries of the Qaraite Yefeth ben Ali:<sup>1</sup> according to Schorstein, "in our commentary alone fifteen such borrowings may be pointed out".<sup>2</sup> The present writer would be inclined to be less emphatic, although there are certainly many points at which ibn Ezra's exegesis coincides with that of the Qaraite. It may be noted that Schorstein makes comparisons with ibn Ezra's commentary at only eight points in his text of Yefeth and it may be assumed that he found the other seven in the commentary on chapters iii and iv which are missing from his chief manuscript (B.M. Or 2554) and therefore from his edition of the text. These points may be mentioned briefly here.

Both Yefeth and ibn Ezra refer (the former under i 1, the latter under iv 7), in their dating of the story, to the fact that Boaz was an old man which they deduce from his commendation of Ruth for 'not going after young men' (iii 10); both explain

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1. I. Broydé, "Japheth haLevi", JE vii p.73.
  2. N. Schorstein, Der Commentar des Karäers Jepheth ben Ali zum Buche Ruth, Berlin 1903, p.5 n.2.

אל בנותי (i 14) as meaning "Do not go with me, my daughters"; and both treat הלהן (i 13) as a corruption of הלהם. Both agree that the idea of levirate marriage is not to be found in Naomi's speech of i 11f, since, according to Talmudic law, the levirate obligation is restricted to brothers-in-law who were born in the lifetime of their deceased brother. The two commentators give similar explanations of the word 'full' (i 21) - Yefeth said that Naomi had had 'a husband, children and goods' at the time of her departure, ibn Ezra said 'sons and money'; both explain the repetition of 'who returned' (i 22) as being necessitated to connect the arrival of Naomi and Ruth in Bethlehem with the beginning of the barley-harvest; both "explain" the curious form העבורי (ii 8) by pointing to a similar example - שפוטו in Exodus xviii 26 (Schorstein has, erroneously, Ez. for Ex.) and both identify 'the living' (ii 27) as Naomi and Ruth.

In addition to these points, raised by Schorstein, we may mention the fact that both Yefeth and ibn Ezra explained the word 'Ephrathites' (i 2) - which, throughout the midrashic literature and in Rashi's commentary, was taken as descriptive of rank or nobility - as a gentilic noun, 'men of Ephrathah' or 'men of Ephraim'. Both say the reason for the twofold occurrence of 'Bethlehem' (i 1,2) is to indicate that Elimelech and his family were natives of the town as well as the fact that it was the starting-place for their journey to Moab. Both explain ענה (i 21) as 'testify', and both suggest that the discrepancy between Boaz's instructions to Ruth (ii 8) - 'Stay close to my young women' - and Ruth's report of these



instructions to Naomi (ii 21) - 'He said "Stay close to my young men"' - results from the omission by the narrator of the second part of Boaz's instructions in the first case, and of the first part in the second.

In that part of the Qaraite commentary which we know only in the Hebrew version attributed to Salmon ben Yeroham, we also find close similarities with the exegesis of ibn Ezra. Both Salmon and ibn Ezra explain וילפת (iii 8) from Job vi 18, while Rashi and the midrashic literature had explained it from Judges xvi 29,<sup>1</sup> and both defend יגאל (iv 4) against emendation to חגאל by suggesting that Boaz had turned for a moment, at this point in the story, to address either the elders or a third redeemer.

Ibn Ezra makes no mention of Yefeth, Salmon, or any other Qaraite scholar by name, but he makes one reference to the sect, calling them 'the deniers' (המכחישים), in his comment on 'Have I more sons in my womb who will be husbands for you?' (i 11), to which we have referred. This comment, in which he agrees that the text cannot be used as proof against the Qaraite view of levirate marriage, is probably the nearest thing to evidence that can be found in his commentary to suggest that he did know and use Yefeth's work. However, none of the points mentioned above can be shown to be uniquely the work of Yefeth, which

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1. See further, below p. 292f.

could have been learnt only from his commentary. They do not, therefore, warrant the inference that the later writer used the earlier work as a source, though their number does, admittedly, suggest that the similarities between the commentaries of ibn Ezra and Yefeth/Salmon are not the result of accident.

In the course of his commentary ibn Ezra refers three times to his commentaries on other biblical books, one already written and two forthcoming: **יבמה** (i 15), he says, "We have already explained in the Torah", and we refer, at the appropriate point in our translation,<sup>1</sup> to his comment on Deut. xxv 5f.; on **אשה חיל** (iii 11) he says "I will comment on this in Proverbs", and in his commentary on Ruth i 2 he says "Moabite~~esses~~ were permitted (in marriage) to Israel, for the scripture only forbade that Ammonites and Moabites should come into the congregation and that they should marry the daughters of Israel, and in the book of Ezra I will explain this properly". It appears that he did not write commentaries either on Proverbs or on Ezra - those printed in the Rabbinic Bibles under his name are, apparently, actually the work of Moses Qimhi<sup>2</sup> - and in the case of the commentary on Ezra this is particularly to be regretted. One cannot help but wonder how he proposed to defend his views that it was permissible for Israelites to marry Moabite

1. See below p. 178.

2. W. Bacher, JE vi p.522.

women in the face of the opposition to such marriages that is described there.

For the text of ibn Ezra's commentary the same printed editions of Miqra'ot G<sup>e</sup>dolot have been used as for Rashi's commentary. Unlike Rashi's commentary there is little difference between these editions and such variation as does occur is noted in the translation.

(v) David Qimhi.

David Qimhi (1160-1235) "wrote commentaries on Genesis, the Prophets, the Psalms and Chronicles. Some scholars ascribe to him also commentaries on the remaining books of the Bible".<sup>1</sup> "A Commentary attributed to Qimhi"<sup>2</sup> was published in 1563 in conjunction with an edition of the Hebrew text of Ruth by Jean Mercier, then Professor of Hebrew at Paris,<sup>3</sup> the Hebrew title of the book being מגלה רוח ... עם פירוש קצר המיוחס לרד"ק and it is the text of this commentary that is translated below.<sup>4</sup> Since Mercier was careful to include the word מיוחס in his superscription we may infer that he was not convinced of the accuracy of the attribution, although we may also infer that he saw some reason for attributing the commentary to Qimhi.

1. C. Levias, JE vii p.494. Cf. G.H. Box in R.G. Finch (trslr.), The Longer Commentary of R. David Kimhi on the First Book of Psalms, London 1919, p.xix.
2. פי' המיוחס לקמחי.
3. Io. Mercerus, Libellus Ruth cum Scholiis Masorae ad marginem, Paris 1563.
4. See Part II E.

The language used by the commentator as his vernacular might appear to be a sensible point at which to begin the search for his identity but unfortunately the language which is used in two glosses in this commentary is difficult to identify. The word **ג'וונטו** which appears as a gloss on **נעלו** (iv 8) could be intended to represent the word 'glove' in a Romance language (e.g. Italian 'guanto', Spanish 'guante') and, bearing in mind the fact that the Targum reads 'glove' instead of 'shoe', this could be an acceptable meaning for the word.<sup>1</sup> The word **זורה** (iii 2) is explained by a gloss **נ'רבי'לדי**, but this is even more difficult than **ג'וונטו**, for the form of the word is unintelligible. There is in Spanish a verb bieldar meaning 'to winnow', but even if the latter part of our word may be related to this verb the first part of it remains incomprehensible. All that emerges from this inquiry is that our two words appear to stem from a Romance language, perhaps from a form of Spanish. If it were possible positively to identify the language as Spanish this might be taken as pointing towards Qimhi's authorship of the commentary since Qimhi presumably spoke Spanish, but in the absence of such positive identification it would be very dangerous to base any conclusions on this line of reasoning.

The commentary may be said to stand in the tradition of Rashi, though it also displays, in places, a marked independence of all the other mediaeval commentaries which have been examined

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1. See further below p.235.

in the present study. It may also be noted that the commentary consists of a series of isolated comments and is markedly different in character from Qimhi's longer commentary on the Psalms, which is the work of that author with which the present writer is most familiar. We must admit that there does not seem to be any firm ground on which to base an opinion as to whether or not this commentary is indeed to be considered a work of David Qimhi, but it will be convenient for the purpose of the present study to maintain the sixteenth century attribution and to refer to its author by that name.

It may be noted that this commentary is identical with that of Rashi in its comment in one word on חִסְבֵּרְנָה (i 13) - 'it is a rhetorical question', and in explaining גְּאוּלָּה and חִמּוּרָה (iv 7) as 'selling' (מְכִירָה) and 'changing' (חֲלִיפִיז) respectively. The opening sections of the two commentaries (i.e. their comments on i 1) are substantially the same and both explain וִילָפָה (iii 8) from Ju. xvi 29 but in different words.

In opposing Rashi's view that Elimelech emigrated out of selfishness by proposing that he was forced to go by the famine, Qimhi may be seen to agree with the Anonymous Rabbi, and in asserting that Ruth and Orpah were converted to Judaism before their marriage to Mahlon and Chilion he agrees with ibn Ezra against Rashi. He may also be said to agree with ibn Ezra in interpreting 'Ephrathites' as meaning 'people from Ephrathah', though the latter also supplies the information that it sometimes means 'men of Ephraim'. In connecting חֲעֻגְנָה with עֵיגוֹן, he agrees with Rashbam and Joseph Qara.

Several of the comments, too, are without counterpart in any of the other commentaries. We may mention the notable example of Qimhi's exegesis of the phrase 'For you are a redeemer' (iii 9), in which he asserts that the ancient Israelites practised a custom of redemption which was, in effect, a levirate marriage contracted between a childless widow who had no brother-in-law and a more distant relative of her husband. The fact that Qimhi found an element of obligation on the part of Boaz or the other 'redeemer' to marry Ruth was not in itself original, for this view was widely held in the Middle Ages; opinion varied as to the nature of and the reason for the obligation and Qimhi's original contribution lies in his suggestion that there was a custom of redeemer-marriage which had the force of law, and in this suggestion he foreshadowed by some seven centuries the theme which, with its many variations, has occupied not a little space in the learned journals of the twentieth century. We shall return to this subject below when the various Rabbinic views of Ruth's re-marriage are considered.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See p.268f.

## Part II

THE COMMENTARIES TRANSLATED

## A. COMMENTARY ATTRIBUTED TO SALMON BEN YEROHAM.

A COMMENTARY, PRECIOUS AND DELIGHTFUL, WRITTEN,<sup>1</sup>

ON THE SCROLL OF RUTH,

- IT IS NOT EQUALLED BY THE GOLD OF OPHIR OR ONYX<sup>2</sup> -

BY OUR TEACHER SALMON BEN YEROHAM,

MAY HIS MEMORY BE BLESSED.

Blessed be the one ancient God of Israel, who created his universe to show his greatness and who made the heavens as a place for the temple of his glorious throne of glory and for his holy angels who praise his name; and who made the earth as a place for his glorious shechina which appeared to the prophets; and who also made the earth a place for his chosen servants the righteous, as he has said - may his name be blessed - 'Thus said the Lord, "Heaven is my throne"'.<sup>3</sup>

Now, while he is great and glorified, he has chosen only the humble who walk in his ways, and he loves and honours them

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1. חרוט lit. 'inscribed, engraved'. The word has apparently been chosen purely in the interests of making a rhyme for רוט the superscription being, in Hebrew, a quatrain of doggerel verse.
  2. An adaptation (reading יסולה for חסלה) of Job xxviii 16; שֹׁהַם (onyx) was probably the only word the composer of the superscription could find to rhyme with יְרוּחַם.
  3. Is. lxvi 1. 'Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool'.

above all the sons of men on account of their righteousness, as it is said 'All these things my hand has made'.<sup>1</sup> And if this humble man is well-born, of good family, of the right seed, behold two things are combined in him; he is like the righteous princes of the sons of Israel, who are our roots and the roots of our kings and priests.

And further, I have found that the glory of religion and piety is more honourable than nobility of pedigree, for we have found that men of pedigree come down from their noble position as a result of wickedness. And we have found that the convert, who comes to the religion of Israel, may achieve and attain to great nobility on account of his righteousness, as Jethro did, who had a great name because he trusted in God and came under his wings, as I have explained in the context of 'and Jethro heard'.<sup>2</sup>

This does not apply to male converts only, but also to devout women proselytes like Jael, whom Deborah mentioned in her song, saying that she is blessed before God in nobility and greatness, as it is said 'May Jael be blessed among women'.<sup>3</sup> And so it is with this upright proselyte, the beauty of whose wisdom and religion the prophet has explained to us in this scroll, on account of which God allowed her to be associated

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1. Is. lxvi 2. The relevance of the quotation is in what follows: 'I will look on him who is poor and of humble spirit and who trembles at my word'.
  2. Ex. xviii 1. As Markon observes (p.4.n.3), it is apparent from this that Salmon also wrote a commentary on the Torah. See below p. 306.
  3. Ju. v 24.



with a great and eminent man, Boaz, for Ruth became his wife, to teach you that reverence and steadfastness in religious men are greater than nobility of pedigree and happy is everyone who observes God's commandments and makes God his trust and refuge, as it is said 'Kiss the son, lest he be angry'.<sup>1</sup>

# I.

## 1. AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING:

First of all you must learn all the basic things of this book.

Know that, firstly, there is written for us in this scroll a record of Ruth, for she was a righteous and a discerning woman; and 2) the story of Naomi and the beauty of her instruction and wisdom and righteousness, and her patience<sup>2</sup> in the face of the great adversities and trials which came upon her, and how it came at last that God brought her back, as it is said 'And he shall be to you a bringer-back' etc.;<sup>3</sup> and 3) that we may know about Orpah who, at the beginning of her days, used to worship God, at the time when she was with her husband, and she loved to be with her mother-in-law at the time when she was enjoying good fortune, but when her hope perished with her husband she reverted

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1. Ps. ii 12. The relevance of the quotation for Salmon's exposition is to be found in the end of the verse: 'Happy are all who trust in him'.
  2. The Hebrew נקוצה נקוצה is difficult and I have here followed the Arabic version which reads صبر - translated by Nemoy 'her steadfastness (in the face of successive trials)', although the Hebrew word, if it is derived from קוצ 'thorn' or קץ 'end' (and, unless it is corrupt, no other derivation seems possible) would appear to have a meaning contrary to this.
  3. Ruth iv 6.

to her ignorance<sup>1</sup> and to her unbelief. And this teaches that a man ought to remain in one path from his youth to the day of his death. And 4) we know .....:<sup>2</sup> And 5) we will know from this an explanation of the law of levirate marriage which is of great importance. And 6) that we may know the descent of the faithful<sup>3</sup> from the genealogy of Boaz, whose ancestry is traced as far as Perez son of Judah. And 7) that a man should suppress his desires like Boaz, to inform Elimelech<sup>4</sup> of whose family he was. And all these (have been included) in order that we may know that they are great and important teaching in this world and the world to come.

It says AND IT CAME TO PASS. This makes a connection with the stories which took place in the time of the judges, for

1. I have taken לבאורה to be a corrupt form of (ל)בעורה, a word which I do not find elsewhere, but which I take to be a derivative of בער III 'to be stupid'. Alcalay's Complete Hebrew - English Dictionary gives the words בער 'stupid, ignorant', and בערוה 'stupidity, ignorance'.
2. Heb.: ידענו מנהג צורך מעשיהם בדעתם בדרישה  
ובהקירה ימי שהיה משרת אתם והיו נוחנים הם  
ושכחה היא.

This sentence is really hopeless. The Arabic version at this point is concerned to point out that we learn from the scroll something of the customs among the Israelites of harvesting and gleaning. Nemoy translates thus: 'We learn further from this scroll the customs then prevalent among the Israelites regarding their behaviour in matters of harvesting and gleaning and in the matter of their servants, as we shall explain when we come to the story of Boaz'.

3. The Arabic version has 'David'.
4. The point is obscure. The Arabic version omits this sentence, and so offers no assistance with the difficulty.

their stories are written in the book of Judges, but the author wrote about Boaz and Ruth in a separate book, for the material relating to Boaz and Ruth is not like the material relating to the judges, therefore he placed this scroll with all five scrolls but it was formerly written at the beginning,<sup>1</sup> in correct chronological order, for Boaz was before Solomon.

And it says IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING. They were not judges of law for there are no stories of judges of law in our books, but stories of war-judges have been written for us, and these are Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Samson and the rest of the judges. And it says WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING and it does not say 'in the days of the judges', for if it said 'in the days of the judges' it would not show that this was written in the days when the judges had authority, because we would not know that this was the time of their authority. But since it says WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING, we know that this thing happened at the time of their authority and power, for a judge is called 'judge' until the day of his death even if he does not (perform the function of a) judge, therefore it says WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING.

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1. This reference is apparently to the Palestinian tradition of the order of the Writings as reflected in Codex L and followed by Kittel's Biblia Hebraica (O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, An Introduction, (1965) p.443, O. Kaiser, Einleitung in der alte Testament (1969) p.316) in which the megilloth are arranged, according to the presumed chronological order of their composition, in the order Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther. Since he refers to this as an earlier practice, Salmon was presumably familiar with the arrangement of the megilloth according to the order of their use in the Jewish liturgical year.

If it said 'It was in the days of so-and-so', either of Othniel or some other, we would have known who he was. Therefore some scholars say that it was in the time of Gideon, for it says in connection with Gideon 'They left no means of sustenance in Israel'.<sup>1</sup> But I say that if this had been at the time of Gideon, Elimelech and his household would have returned from the fields of Moab after 7 years, for it says 'And the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years'.<sup>2</sup> Elimelech went into the fields of Moab because of the severity of the famine and they dwelt there ten years and then they heard that 'the Lord had visited his people to give them bread'.<sup>3</sup> And it is not unlikely that this event took place in the days of the judges whose stories are not explained to us, such as Jair and Ibzan and Tola. And it is likely that it was in the time of Tola ben Puah and his comrades, before the days of Jephthah the Gileadite, for Boaz was of the third generation after Nahshon, and from the time of Nahshon to the time of David<sup>4</sup> was (some) 400 years, and it is likely that Boaz lived in the middle of these 400 years. And Boaz was an old man at this time, as is explained by the verse 'not to go after young men'.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ju. vi 4.

2. Ju. vi 1.

3. Ruth i 6.

4. Correction based on the Arabic version. The Hebrew text has 'Boaz', but it is impossible, by biblical reckoning, that there should have been 400-odd years between Nahshon and Boaz.

5. Ruth iii 10.

It says THERE WAS A FAMINE IN THE LAND. The famine was not in Bethlehem alone but in all the land of Israel, for it says 'That the Lord had visited his people' etc. And further, if there had been a place in the land where there was no famine, in the land of Israel, Elimelech would have gone there and would not have gone to the fields of Moab. And there could be no cause for a famine in the land of Israel except abundance of sins, for it is a holy land and it vomits up its inhabitants if they are wicked, as it says about it 'A land that devours its inhabitants'<sup>1</sup> - these are the 7 nations;<sup>2</sup> 'you have been destroying your nations'<sup>3</sup> - that is Israel and Judah.

AND A MAN WENT FROM BETHLEHEM, JUDAH. This teaches us that he went with his wife and his sons, for a man is obliged to look after his wife and sons. Therefore they removed there. And it teaches that he set out FROM BETHLEHEM, JUDAH, and it says 'Judah' because there is another Bethlehem in the land of Israel as well as this,<sup>4</sup> therefore it says FROM BETHLEHEM, JUDAH.

And it says TO SOJOURN IN THE FIELD OF MOAB. It shows us the place to which he removed, for they had heard that there was food there, in Moab, and it is near to the land of Israel and so they went there. And it says TO SOJOURN. It teaches that he went to dwell there as a ger and not to settle there permanently,

1. Num. xiii 32.
2. This is apparently a reference to the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan.
3. Ezek. xxxvi 13.
4. A Bethlehem in the territory of Zebulun is mentioned in Jos. xix 15.

but (only) until the famine would go away and they could return to their own land. And this contradicts the view of those who say that Elimelech and his sons only died because they would not accept God's testing by the famine in the land of Israel, but went into an unclean land for the sake of food. But it is not so. Have we not found that Elisha said to the Shunamite woman, 'Arise, and go and sojourn' etc.,<sup>1</sup> and she went to the land of the Philistines? And so Abraham went down to Egypt, for famine leads a man into all kinds of migrations.

And it says HE AND HIS WIFE AND HIS TWO SONS. There were 4 people. And if he had had (other children) beside Mahlon and Chilion he would have taken them with him, and then the scripture would have mentioned them. And later in this book it is shown that Naomi had no (other sons) except Mahlon and Chilion.

2. And it says THE MAN'S NAME WAS ELIMELECH. It records his name for he was a respected and important man. And thus it remembers the name of his spouse, for she had merit that she should be remembered for ever. And it mentions the names of the sons to show that Ruth was the wife of Mahlon. And it makes mention of them here, in the beginning, because they come afterwards.

And it says EPHRATHITES. This means: 'from the city Ephrath', which is Bethlehem, as it is written 'And thou, Bethlehem, Ephrathah' etc.<sup>2</sup> And likewise it says 'And David was the son of an Ephrathite man'.<sup>3</sup> But there is another meaning for 'Ephrathite', and it is an

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1. II Kings viii 1.

2. Mic. v 1.

3. I Sam. xvii 12.

inhabitant of the land of Ephraim, as it says of Elkanah 'son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite'.<sup>1</sup> 'Ephrathite' can also mean one who actually belongs to the tribe of Ephraim, as it is said 'Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite'.<sup>2</sup> Likewise it says 'Are you an Ephrathite?'.<sup>3</sup>

And again it says FROM BETHLEHEM, JUDAH, for two reasons:

- a) to show and to explain that they were Ephrathites because they lived in Bethlehem, Judah, the name of which is Ephrath, and
- b) when it says, in the first verse, FROM BETHLEHEM, it shows that he went out from Bethlehem, but this does not show that he was a resident of Bethlehem, therefore it says (again) 'from Bethlehem', and this shows that he was one of its residents.

And it says AND THEY CAME TO THE FIELDS<sup>4</sup> OF MOAB for, when they came there, they dwelt in them, for they had come on account of them, and it was, from the beginning, their intention to go there, at the time when they set out from Bethlehem, because it was on account of the fields of Moab that they had come.

3. AND ELIMELECH DIED. The author does not record how long Elimelech lived in the fields of Moab.

1. I Sam. i 1. Markon's Hebrew text has, erroneously, ךלצ for לצ.

2. I Kings xi 26.

3. Ju. xii 5.

4. Since it appears from his comment on i 6 that Salmon understood שד to be the plural construct of שדה, I render the former as 'fields', the latter as 'field'.

And it says NAOMI'S HUSBAND, after it has said AND HIS WIFE'S NAME WAS NAOMI. It shows that he did not divorce her, and also the text observes of her sorrowfully that she was left alone without protection, for the husband is a protection for the wife and one who provides for all her needs. And when it says SHE WAS LEFT, AND HER TWO SONS, it teaches that he died before his sons were married, and it also teaches us that Mahlon and Chilion were sons of Naomi, for it says above 'he and his wife and his two sons', and we might think that they were their father's sons only and not hers, therefore it says that they were sons both of him and of her.

4. AND THEY TOOK FOR THEMSELVES WIVES. It does not say 'their mother took wives for them', but 'they took for themselves wives' without their mother's permission, for they were Moabites. Don't you see that it says about Ishmael 'and his mother took a wife for him'?<sup>1</sup> Also (it says this) to show that they were grown up and of age.

And it says MOABITES. (Either) they belonged to the nation of Moab or they had grown up there and were called Moabites. However, they did not belong to the religion of Israel, for it is said 'Your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods'.<sup>2</sup>

It says THE NAME OF ONE WAS ORPAH AND THE NAME OF THE SECOND WAS RUTH. We know that Chilion, who was the younger, married before

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1. Gen. xxi 21.

2. Ruth i 16.



his elder brother, for Mahlon was the elder and he was Ruth's husband.

5. AND THE TWO OF THEM ALSO DIED. It says 'ALSO' to make a connection with the death of their father, and it says MAHLON AND CHILION so that we may not think that one of the daughters-in-law died with her husband.

And it says AND THE WOMAN WAS LEFT. She was left bereaved of her children and a widow of her husband, for it cannot rightly be said that "Reuben was left from Simeon".<sup>1</sup>

And it says OF HER TWO SONS. But her daughters-in-law were left with her and already there had come from one of them a son who was considered in her eyes as the deceased.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Or 'A was left from B'. His point is that the text does not make sense if the mem is taken in a partitive sense; he seems to have had no conception of the privative use of mem and this has given rise to the paraphrase 'bereaved of . . . . . widow of . . . . .'. The Targum employed an identical method of paraphrase for this phrase: **ואשהארת אחתא מחכלא מחרי' בנהא וארמלא מבעלה.**

2. The point of this comment seems to have been to explain the use of the word 'two'. Since it is already clear that Naomi had only two sons, 'her sons' would have been sufficient to indicate that both had died. Salmon's explanation, then, of the occurrence of the word 'two' is that, by this time, Naomi had a grandson whom she considered as a (third) son, so the 'two sons' are mentioned in the text to make it clear that it was they who had died.

Instead of the definite statement that a son had been born to one of the daughters-in-law, the Arabic version reads 'it was still possible that one of them might have a child', which is a more suitable reading since it seems clear from the story that neither Ruth nor Orpah had children, but the statement of the Hebrew text - **וכבר בא מאחח מהן בן** - cannot be construed in any other way than as a definite statement that 'a son had already been born to one of them'.

6. AND SHE AROSE AND HER DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW. After her sons were dead she returned. And indeed the reason why she returned (is given - it was) because the famine had gone away from the land of Israel, on account of which they had removed to the fields of Moab, as it is said 'and they came to the fields of Moab'<sup>1</sup> etc., for rural areas are something different from towns, therefore it says 'and they came to the fields of Moab' and it does not say 'to a city of Moab'. It says they came FROM THE FIELDS OF MOAB, as it says 'and they came to the fields of Moab', for she had been continually going about asking and enquiring from travellers,<sup>2</sup> in every place and she heard nothing. And it says FOR SHE HEARD IN A FIELD<sup>3</sup> OF MOAB: (The spelling of שדה ) with hé shows that when she stayed in one field she heard that God had visited his people, and then she hastened to return for she was yearning for the land of Israel.

7. AND SHE WENT OUT FROM THE PLACE. It says in the previous verse 'and she returned from the fields of Moab' but it does not explain that her daughters-in-law went with her, and in this verse it is recorded that they set out with her. And it says 'from the place', to which she had removed before the time of her

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1. Ruth i 2.

2. בשדה מואב has intruded at this point from the following line.

3. That this is the significance, for Salmon, of the spelling שדה is clear from the comment which follows. (See also above p.65 n.4 ).

departure, and she did not move from there because they were pleased with that place. And it says TO RETURN TO THE LAND OF JUDAH, from where they had set out.

8. AND NAOMI SAID TO HER TWO DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW. This shows Naomi's wisdom and her piety, for she did not say anything to them until they had set out with her. And when they had begun to walk with her, then she began to speak with them to discover what was in their hearts, whether they were going with her for the sake of the love of religion or not, for if they were not going out of great love of religion she would not allow them to go with her, as it is said GO, TURN BACK, EACH WOMAN TO HER MOTHER'S HOUSE. This shows that each of them had relatives on her mother's side, for if they had had a 'father's house' the text would say so, or (rather) Naomi would have said 'each woman to her father's house', in accordance with the custom of the Torah, for it says 'and she shall return to her father's house as in her youth'.<sup>1</sup> So this is to teach you that they had no relations on their fathers' side.

And it says MAY GOD DEAL KINDLY WITH YOU etc. For you have shown kindness to your husbands and to me.

9. And it says GOD GRANT TO YOU THAT YOU MAY FIND REST etc. This means: May he pay you fully your reward for the way you have

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1. Lev. xxii 13.

behaved with the dead and with me, that is, may he give you, each of you, a good husband with whom you may be in happiness and rest for it says 'and may you find rest' etc.

And it says WITH THE DEAD, that is, those who were dead at that time, meaning her sons. Mention is made of the dead before herself for two reasons: a) the duty falls on a wife to honour her husband more than her mother-in-law, and b) they had shown kindness to her after their husbands were dead. And this shows the greatness of her wisdom. And after she had finished her words she embraced them, for it says 'and she kissed them', for she sought to send them away and to make them go back to their own land so that they would not go with her, but they sobbed their supplications, remembering their husbands, for it is said 'and they lifted up their voices' etc.

10. AND THEY SAID TO HER. This shows that they had not separated from her, but were going with her to be among her people.

11. AND NAOMI SAID: "GO BACK, MY DAUGHTERS". She had heard from them, for they had said to her 'We will go with you to your people', and she wanted to test them (to find out) whether they were saying this with all their heart or out of a liking to show respect to their mother-in-law. Already Orpah has been shown as speaking out of shame, but it is made clear that Ruth did this out of love of religion.

It says WHY WOULD YOU GO WITH ME? For you have nothing to gain by coming with me. And it says HAVE I YET SONS IN MY WOMB? This means: if there were sons, would it be right (for you) to

marry them and that you should be waiting (for them)? It would not be right for them to be your husbands, for even according to the view of the Rabbanites it would not be right, for they have said (that only) brothers who are united in their inheritance from their father and their mother are under the obligation of levirate marriage and not (brothers) by (the same) mother (only). And further, (it would not be right) because (the obligation of levirate marriage does not apply in the case of) brothers who were not alive at the same time.<sup>1</sup> Then she cut off their hope with this statement and she was waiting to see whether they would go with her after this or not.

12. GO BACK, MY DAUGHTERS, GO. And it says IF I SAID I HAVE HOPE. This means: I said in the days of my youth "there is hope for me, that I may marry (another) man", and also when I would have married him I would have been with him by night and I would have borne sons, but now there is no hope for me. Another interpretation of IF I SAID is: if I were saying now that I will take a husband and be with him by night, you would have hope; do not hope for this thing. And she said this as a (rhetorical) question.

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1. Salmon here quotes the dictum - **שלא היה בעולמו** - used in Yeb. 2b (= Mishna I 1), 9a and 17a (= Mishna II 1) etc., in reference to the case of a man who, having been born subsequent to his brother's death, is not under the obligation of levirate marriage to his brother's widow.

13. And it says הלהן, which is like הלהם. Similarly it says עשיחן הועבה.<sup>1</sup> Mem and nun are the same. Another interpretation of הלהן (is that) she was speaking to the women who had come out with her to see her off, and she said to them "Would it be right that Orpah and Ruth should expect to be remaining without husbands, that they should be able to accept this, until I have sons who will marry them?".<sup>2</sup> And it says WOULD YOU WAIT? Would you wait<sup>3</sup> and not be married; this would not be right when my hope has perished.

And it says העגונה. In the language of the Sages עגונות are grieving women.<sup>4</sup> (According to) another view it is related to the word מעוג,<sup>5</sup> (and means) 'would you tie yourselves to my sons?' If it is explained as meaning 'grieving',<sup>6</sup> the nun belongs to the root and the word is feminine singular like

1. Ezek. xxxiii 26, where עשיחם would be expected.
2. Thus he proposes that the feminine ending be construed as applying to Orpah and Ruth.
3. החכו is explained by the synonym חשברנה.
4. אגונות. This is a description, not a definition, of עגונות, who are wives deserted by their husbands but not divorced. The word עגונות I have found only in Gittin 33b, and so it would appear that Salmon used the expression 'language of the Sages' (לשון החכמים) in reference to the Talmud as a whole, rather than simply to the Mishna.
5. The intention is apparently to explain העגונה from the root עוג 'to draw a circle', then 'to enclose within a circle', 'restrict', (so Rashi), although it appears below that Salmon was thinking rather of a root עגה.
6. i.e. from the root עגן.

הַאֲמָנָה,<sup>1</sup> where the hé is superfluous and the word is the same as הַאֲמָן, and thus the meaning of הַעֲגֹנָה is 'Each woman will be left alone,<sup>2</sup> she will be left alone and grieved'. But if it is explained as meaning 'being bound',<sup>3</sup> the nun belongs to the plural ending and its imperative is הַעֲגֵה, like הַרְאֵה (which is the imperative of) הַרְאִינָה.<sup>4</sup> And although הַעֲגֹנָה is pointed with sere and not with seghol (הַעֲגִינָה), it is like לִיחַמְנָה.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The only occurrence of the word הַאֲמָנָה which I have been able to locate is Is. lx 4, where it is 3 f. pl. imperf. Niphal. However, Salmon seems to think it is a form of הַאֲמָן, 3 f. s. imperf., so הַעֲגֹנָה, in his view, is a strange form of הַעֲגֵן.
  2. הַעֲגֵן. The text actually reads הַעֲנֹג, but the metathesis is probably accidental.
  3. i.e. from the root עֲנֹג, or, as Salmon seems to have seen it, עֲנָה. (See above p. 72 n. 5).
  4. In effect Salmon is saying that הַעֲגֹנָה is the imperfect Niphal of a lamed hé verb. It is thus apparent here that he derived הַעֲגֹנָה from a root עֲנָה.
  5. לִיחַמְנָה (Gen. xxx 41) is an infinitive construct piel with the suffix 3 f. pl. (so BDB, KB2) and cannot, therefore, rightly bear comparison with הַעֲגֹנָה, whether this be construed as a 2 f. pl. imperf. Niphal of עֲנֵן or, as is Salmon's view here, of the root עֲנָה. Salmon, however, seems only to have been interested by the coincidence of the vowel sere.

חֲשֹׁבְרָנָה. Its imperative is שָׁבֵר.<sup>1</sup> חֲשֹׁבְרָנָה is like  
וּלְמִדָּנָה.<sup>2</sup>

And it says NO, MY DAUGHTERS. This means "Do not go with me, my daughters", or "No, my daughters, I shall have no more children, and if I did have more children, it would not be right for (them to be) husbands for you". Thus she destroyed their hope with this statement.

Know that (this passage has been displaced from the end of v.11)<sup>3</sup> THE RABBANITES, THE IGNORAMUSES, think that this is evidence for us that (the duty of) levirate marriage applies to two actual brothers, since it is said 'Have I yet sons in my womb'. But this is wrong, for even the Sages allowed levirate marriage only when the brothers were alive at the same time, and not in the case of the brother who 'was not in his world',<sup>4</sup> and here it says HAVE I YET SONS IN MY WOMB to show that it is a (rhetorical) question.

14. AND THEY RAISED THEIR VOICES AND WEPT AGAIN. When it says 'and they wept again', it makes a connection with the earlier weeping.

And it says AND ORPAH KISSED HER MOTHER-IN-LAW, for she wished to turn back, and indeed she did turn back, for it is said "Behold your sister-in-law has turned back".

1. If the vowel-sign games is original it is difficult to see what he is trying to say. See below p.285f.
2. This must be וּלְמִדָּנָה (Jer. ix 19) - the imperative f.pl. piel - which has the same vowel pattern as חֲשֹׁבְרָנָה.
3. The note מִקְצָה י"א in the Hebrew text seems to have this significance.
4. See above p.71 n. 1 .



And it says BUT RUTH CLUNG TO HER, for she did not separate from her but said to her "I will not leave you nor turn back".

15. AND SHE SAID "YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW HAS GONE BACK". See the greatness of Naomi's wisdom, for she discerned what was in Ruth's heart, and she also discerned the machinations of Orpah when she said to them at the beginning "Have I yet sons in my womb?". It was made clear to her what was in Orpah's heart, and then she went back. And when she saw that Ruth did not turn back, Naomi said to herself, "I have uncovered what was in Orpah's heart, so I will now uncover by different means what is in Ruth's heart". And she said to her "Behold your sister-in-law has gone back, for she yearns and desires to be in the community of her own people and also to worship her former gods; you, too, go back to your former life before you come to the land of Israel and stay and enjoy your city and your gods". Naomi said this with a hint of censure on Orpah, for Orpah was little esteemed in Naomi's eyes. If Ruth had done as Orpah had done, she would have censured her too.

יְבֹמָה. The absolute form is יְבֹמָה, like יְבֹמָה.

16. AND RUTH SAID "DO NOT ENTREAT ME". Ruth replied in her wisdom according to the way that Naomi had spoken about Orpah and her reply, which reflected her shame in relation to Orpah, is recorded, and she made two points to her. 1. "That I desire to be with you rather than with my own relatives"; for Ruth mentioned four phrases, namely WHERE YOU GO I WILL GO, WHERE YOU LODGE I WILL LODGE, WHERE YOU DIE I WILL DIE, AND THERE I WILL BE BURIED. This shows her

great love, like the love of a mother for a son. The 2nd point is her reply to her words when she said "Behold your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods". She said "YOUR PEOPLE IS MY PEOPLE AND YOUR GOD IS MY GOD".

And it says DO NOT ENTREAT ME. This means 'Do not implore'<sup>1</sup> me in this matter which is hard and bitter to me'.

She said WHERE YOU GO, I WILL GO. This means 'To whatever city you go, I will go, whether it is your own city or any other'.<sup>2</sup>

17. And it says WHERE YOU DIE, I WILL DIE, AND THERE I WILL BE BURIED. She spoke here of what she knew (was certain to happen); there might be other things besides, such as violence, or captivity, or other things which might separate them but there is no word of such things.

And it says THUS SHALL GOD DO TO ME. This is a curse-oath, and she mentioned the curses to herself but the narrator has not written them down for us.

And it says DEATH SHALL SEPARATE ME AND YOU. She swore that "I shall not willingly separate from you, unless this thing happens through force". And although the text is not explicit about (the proviso about) force, commonsense requires it, for a man does not know when he will die or where he will die.

1. 'החננו' is explained by a synonym 'פגע'.
2. The Rabbanites had interpreted this as an acceptance on Ruth's part of the prohibition on journeys on the Sabbath. Salmon prefers the literal sense.

18. AND SHE SAW THAT SHE WAS DETERMINED. In truth we know this for Naomi rejoiced at her words and then she praised God. And it says **מחממץ** and not **מחזקת** because **אמץ** is a stronger word than **חזק**, for it says **חזק ואמץ**,<sup>1</sup> that is 'be strong' at the beginning and 'be mighty' afterwards.

19. AND THE TWO OF THEM WENT. They set their faces to return to Bethlehem.

And it says THE WHOLE TOWN WAS STIRRED UP. This means 'all the women of the town', for it says **והאמרנה**, and the subject of the verb is 'the women'.

And it says IS THIS NAOMI? This shows that there were many women who knew Naomi, and yet the woman had gone away from there about ten years before.

20. AND SHE SAID TO THEM. This speech from her points out 3 things: 1. that when they said 'Is this Naomi?' they were surprised when they saw how her circumstances had changed and how many sorrows and trials had come upon her; 2. that her name is derived from **נעם**, for she had been refined with many graces; and 3. her name was changed to Marah, for it is said CALL ME MARAH.

We have also found written 'Call him and let him eat bread'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. In Jos. i 6 etc.

2. Ex. ii 20, where a similar defective form occurs, but vocalized there **קראן**.

It says קָרָאן and מִצָּאן<sup>1</sup> with seghol because of the aleph, for it is like שָׁמְעָה. When Naomi<sup>2</sup> saw that her circumstances had changed, she took it upon herself to call her name Marah. Then the women wept with a great weeping when they heard this thing and when she said FOR SHADDAI HAS MADE ME VERY BITTER, for she mentioned the bitterness of which she had drunk.

21. And it says I WENT OUT FULL. (This means) 'I had a husband and sons and much pleasantness, but God has brought me back empty of everything'.

And it says AND GOD HAS TESTIFIED AGAINST ME. 'For he has made me a widow'.

And it says AND SHADDAI HAS TREATED ME ILL. 'For my sons are dead'.

And it says עֵנָה בִּי, that is 'he has testified against me',<sup>3</sup> as in 'our sins testify against us',<sup>4</sup> and 'he has testified falsely against his brother'.<sup>5</sup> (It means) 'for my sins have testified against me before Shaddai and they have caused me to be a widow and bereaved of my children'.

1. מִצָּאן (i 9) takes the same form as קָרָאן here (i 20).

2. Emending עָמִי for נָעִמִי in Markon's text.

3. הָעֵיד עָלַי.

4. עֹנֵינוּ עָנָה בָנוּ Jer. xiv 7.

5. שָׁקַר עֵנָה בְּאָחִיו Deut. xix 18.

22. AND NAOMI RETURNED. It says above AND IT HAPPENED WHEN THEY CAME TO BETHLEHEM in order to record the time when they came, and it was, as it says, at the beginning of the barley-harvest, when they found bread for their satisfaction.

## II.

1. AND NAOMI HAD AN ACQUAINTANCE THROUGH HER HUSBAND etc.

This verse introduces something which will be taken up later, and we learn 3 things: 1. that Boaz was a friend<sup>1</sup> of Elimelech, for it says מוֹדַע, and because of this he treated Naomi kindly; and 2. that Boaz belonged to Elimelech's family and because of this he married Ruth; and 3. that his name is remembered because he was a respected and important man, a man of great reputation, for it says גִּבּוֹר חֵיל.

מֵרָא<sup>2</sup> and מֵרָה are the same, aleph being similar to hé.

מוֹדַע is an abstract noun, of the same pattern as מוֹשָׁב, מוֹרָא, מוֹצָא, מוֹרָד, and it means בֶּעַל מוֹדַע<sup>3</sup> as you might say בֶּעַל מוֹשָׁב.<sup>3</sup>

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1. רִיעַ. Apparently Salmon did not understand מוֹדַע to mean 'kinsman'.
  2. As Markon observes (p.8 n.7), this comment has been displaced from i 20.
  3. I leave these phrases untranslated because of the difficulty of rendering them in English. The point of the comment is that the abstract noun 'acquaintance' is here used in the concrete sense of 'an acquaintance', 'a man who is known'. I have not found the phrase בֶּעַל מוֹשָׁב used elsewhere.

2. RUTH THE MOABITE SAID TO NAOMI "LET ME GO, I PRAY, TO THE FIELD". Ruth knew that Naomi would not be able to go out to glean because she was old and she also knew that they had nothing with which they might sustain themselves, and so she had to go out for she was young and strong. It would not have been right for her to go out without her mother-in-law's permission, and so when she (Naomi) saw that she would take advice from her, she said to her "Go, my daughter".

3. AND SHE WENT AND CAME AND GLEANED IN THE FIELD. This means that she came with the gleaners. And it says AFTER THE REAPERS. This shows that she was not dishonest and did not steal as many of the reapers stole.

And it says HER CHANCE HAPPENED. It happened by chance that she came there, and she did not come there intentionally, for she did not know Boaz, for she was a proselyte and he only met her then, but God directed her - and she went - to his field, to give her favour in his eyes, for thus had God promised her, as it is said 'he loves a stranger' etc.<sup>1</sup>

4. AND BEHOLD HE CAME FROM BETHLEHEM etc. This verse teaches two things: 1. that the reapers had preceded Boaz, for they had risen early to earn their living and his overseer was watching them, as it says after this 'the young man who was appointed over

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1. Deut. x 18.

the reapers answered'; and 2. that we may know their manner of greeting: one would say 'God be with you', and the other would reply 'God bless you'. Thus the angel said to Gideon 'The Lord be with you, O mighty man of valour'.<sup>1</sup> This manner of greeting was used in addressing reapers as we know from Gideon and from Boaz's men. But there is another method of greeting reapers and it is to say 'the blessing of God be upon you'. But in the case of people meeting one another and when they see their relations from far off, one says to the other 'Peace upon you', or 'Peace to you', as it says 'And each asked the other about his well-being'.<sup>2</sup> It is also used when one is going away as it is said 'And Jethro said to Moses "Go in peace"'.<sup>3</sup>

We have also found in the scripture the manner of greeting at a time when one is afraid of another; he would say to him and assure him 'Do not fear, peace to you', as Joseph said to his brothers 'Peace to you, do not fear',<sup>4</sup> although they were afraid of him. And Amasai said to David, when he was afraid of them, 'Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helper'.<sup>5</sup> And the angel said to Daniel 'Peace to you, be strong and be strong'.<sup>6</sup> If you

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1. Ju. vi 12.

2. לשלום: 'for peace', Ex. xviii 7.

3. Ex. iv 18.

4. Gen. xliii 23.

5. I Chr. xii 19.

6. Dan. x 19. Markon notes that, for **חזק וחזק**, both his MSS read erroneously **חזק ואמץ**.

say that the time when one says 'God be with you' and 'God bless you' is at the time of harvest and the time of working, I have said that the manner of greeting for reapers is to say 'the blessing of God be upon you; we bless you in the name of God',<sup>1</sup> but this custom is not adhered to.

5. AND BOAZ SAID TO HIS YOUNG MAN WHO WAS APPOINTED OVER THE REAPERS. We know from this that Boaz did not know Ruth as he knew the gleaners who came out from Bethlehem and when he saw her, a stranger, among them, he wanted to ask his young man about her, as it is said "WHO IS THIS YOUNG WOMAN?".

6. AND THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS APPOINTED OVER THE REAPERS ANSWERED. We know from this that his overseer was alert and diligent: he did not allow anyone who came to glean until he knew who he was; either he knew him already or he would ask him at the time. Then he informed him and said "SHE IS A YOUNG MOABITE WOMAN, THE ONE WHO CAME BACK WITH NAOMI FROM THE FIELDS OF MOAB".

7. AND SHE SAID "LET ME GLEAN, I PRAY, AND GATHER IN THE SHEAVES". This means 'from the sheaves', as it says 'they eat in (ב) his bread',<sup>2</sup> and this means 'of (מִן) the bread', and that is the ears which fall from the sheaves. He said this by way of compassion,

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1. The quotation is taken from Ps. cxxix 8 with one slight alteration: Salmon reads עליכם for MT אליכם.

2. Lev. xxii 11.



for the overseer took pity on her and he also knew that Boaz would take pity on her and be compassionate, and perhaps he would be good to her.

It says SHE CAME AND STOOD FROM EARLY MORNING. This shows that he had been watching her from the morning until now, how she had been gleaning, and he pitied her in his heart for she had no great opportunity to glean much and to snatch from the men.

It says **וְהָיָה שְׂבֵתָהּ הַבָּרִיָּה מְעַט**. This means that the barley which Ruth gleaned was (too) little to bring to her mother-in-law who was sitting in the house. This is the likely meaning.

#### 8. BOAZ SAID TO RUTH "HAVE YOU NOT HEARD, MY DAUGHTER?"

Boaz had already heard about Ruth, that she had come to Bethlehem, as it says later "IT HAS CERTAINLY BEEN TOLD TO ME" etc., but he had not seen her face and did not know her until his overseer said to him 'She is a young Moabite woman' etc. When he saw that it was she, then he assured her that he would show her kindness.

It says HAVE YOU NOT HEARD? This needs amplification. It means 'Are you not obliged to accept from my words what I am saying to you?' Another interpretation is 'Have you not accepted and heard your mother-in-law's words and come? Now, hear what I say to you, that is, do not go and glean except in Bethlehem and do not go far from your place. Do not even go away from this field of mine, but as you have been doing, gleaning in my fields, so do I desire that you continue to do, that you stay with my young women and do not go away from here'.

#### 9. It says LET YOUR EYES BE ON THE FIELD WHERE THEY ARE REAPING.

If they are reaping in this field and my reapers go into another field of mine, go with them. And it says HAVE I NOT COMMANDED THE YOUNG MEN NOT TO TOUCH YOU? For if I am not in the field, or my overseer, I have already commanded the rest of the overseers that they shall not harm you and you shall have security and peace.

And it says WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY, GO. This accords with his custom as we shall see later.<sup>1</sup> Therefore he said 'If you are thirsty, go to the place where there is water which is mine and drink. You need not bring water from your house'. And it says STAY CLOSE, THUS, TO MY YOUNG WOMEN.

QUESTION: What need and function were Boaz's young women fulfilling in the field?

ANSWER: Boaz had male overseers who were set apart and who watched the reapers and saw to their needs and he also had female overseers over the women who were gleaning or over the female reapers so that strife and contention should not come among them, so that one (female) gleaner should not harm her companion; Boaz's young women were watching them.

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1. This paraphrase is an attempt to represent the Hebrew כמו שראינו כן מנהגו מאחר כן. The Arabic version at this point is rather longer - Nemoy translates 'he did not say "When thou art hungry, do thou eat with my servants", because he was always present with his reapers at the time of their meals, according to his custom, as we shall see further on' - and it may be that something has been omitted from the Hebrew text. The reference to 'later' is to the comment on ii 14, where Salmon points out that Boaz was generous with his food.

QUESTION: Boaz said 'Stay close, thus to my young women', but Ruth said to Naomi, 'He said to me "You shall stay close to my young men", and she did not say 'my young women'.

ANSWER: Boaz also said to her 'Stay close to my young men', but the writer omitted it and explained it in Ruth's speech. When it says 'where they are reaping' it means 'where the male reapers are reaping', but when it says 'Go after them (f)' it refers to the 'young women'.

And it says TO TOUCH YOU. It means 'to harm you' as in 'whoever touches this man',<sup>1</sup> or else it is (specifically) 'a blow' (מכה) from נָגַע (a blow, stroke).

It says וְצָמָה, and although the aleph is missing and it is like 'violence filled your heart',<sup>2</sup> where aleph is omitted, the imperative is צָמָה, with a he. If it were צָמָא, with aleph, it would have been וְצָמָא like קָרָא and מָצָא.

הַעֲבוּרִי<sup>3</sup> The imperative is עֲבוּרָה; it is like יִשְׁפּוּטוּ<sup>4</sup> the imperative of which is שְׁפּוּטָה and another example is הַשְׁמוּרָה<sup>5</sup>, the imperative of which is שְׁמוּרָה. The noun formed from עָבוּר is הַעֲבוּרָה, and it means 'There shall be no going away from here for you'.

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1. Gen. xxvi 11.

2. Ezek. xxviii 16, where מְלוֹ is written for מְלָאוּ.

3. As Markon observes (p.9, n.11), this belongs with the previous verse.

4. Ex. xviii 26.

5. Prov. xiv 3.

LET ME GLEAN (ואלקטה).<sup>1</sup> Its imperative is לקט and it makes an infinitive<sup>2</sup> לקט like יסור, קנא, רפוא, רדף, as it is said 'an enemy pursues (ירדף) my soul'.<sup>3</sup> When it says here ואלקטה בשבליים (the verb) is from the infinitive לקט and it means 'I will indeed gather<sup>4</sup> among the sheaves'.

It says KNOWN THROUGH HER HUSBAND.<sup>5</sup> It means בעל מודע<sup>6</sup> as it says 'the days shall speak'<sup>7</sup> meaning 'the chroniclers<sup>8</sup> shall speak'.

And it says UNTIL NOW,<sup>9</sup> and it does not say 'now', for the word is not isolated from what precedes and from what follows but it is connected to what precedes and to what follows.

#### 10. AND SHE FELL ON HER FACE AND BOWED TO THE GROUND.

When she heard that he gave her good news in these assurances she fell on her face and bowed down to God by way of thanksgiving just as Abraham's servant had done. Afterwards she said to Boaz "Oh, sir, what have you seen in me that I have found favour in your eyes, despite the fact that I am a stranger to you?". She

1. As Markon observes (p.9, n.16), this belongs with the comment on v.2.
2. מצודר (= Ar. مَصْدَر). This term was widely used for the infinitive, by the early grammarians (Markon, p.3 n.7, Poznanski, JQR viii (1876) p.500 et al.).
3. Ps. vii 6.
4. The cohortative is thus explained as equivalent to the infinitive absolute + the imperfect (לקט אלקט).
5. This comment belongs with v.1 (so Markon, p.9, n.21).
6. See above p.79 n.3.
7. Job xxxii 7.
8. Is this the meaning of בעלי ימים ?
9. This comment should be attached to v.7.

made it known to him that "I am made greater by this thing which you have said to me and which you have promised me, but I am not deserving or worthy of this". After this Boaz showed her that she was worthy: "For you are a faithful woman".

11. BOAZ ANSWERED AND SAID TO HER "IT HAS CERTAINLY BEEN TOLD TO ME" etc. He recounted to her three acts of fidelity which she had done after the death of her husband, and he blessed her because of this, but he did not recount to her the faithfulness which she had shown to her husband in his lifetime for already Orpah was like her in this respect. The first (act of) fidelity was that she had gone after Naomi and attached herself to her after she had given up hope of her husband, and she was mourning with her in her sorrows and in her <sup>afflictions</sup> destitution. She went out and gleaned and brought back food to her and she was considered as her mother in her eyes, and this is (a subject for) praise for daughters-in-law. And so he said ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW.

The second (act of fidelity) is 'that you separated from your relatives and from your place and from your house and came into a foreign country, into the chief place of religion as our father Abraham did when he left his parents and relatives for the sake of love of religion'.

The third (act of fidelity) is that she came into the community of Israel and became a proselyte amongst them.

12. It says MAY THE LORD REPAY YOU FOR YOUR DEED which you did for your mother-in-law, that is, the goodness and the kindness,

And it says MAY YOUR REWARD BE COMPLETE. May he pay you your reward in full in the world to come because you have come into the true religion, for it says AND WENT TO A PEOPLE WHOM YOU DID NOT KNOW, and it says TO SHELTER UNDER HIS WINGS.

Know that when it says 'may the Lord repay you your work' it means 'the reward for your work'. And it says FROM THE LORD, GOD OF ISRAEL, 'for you have come into the faith'. He gladdened her heart in this manner.

13. AND SHE SAID "I WOULD FIND FAVOUR IN YOUR EYES, SIR".

This means "Behold I am finding favour in your eyes, for you have comforted me and gladdened my heart further by the words which you have prayed for me", for without doubt his prayer would be heard. When it says I WOULD FIND FAVOUR it is a statement of fact.<sup>1</sup>

Another interpretation is that she wished by this to be remembered continually by him and that he should not forget her and forsake<sup>2</sup> her, for already she was pleasing to his eyes.

It says I AM NOT. 'I am not worthy to be LIKE ONE OF YOUR MAIDSERVANTS, for I am inferior, but you have promised me every good thing'.

1. i.e. the phrase is to be understood as 'I will find favour', rather than as the wish 'I would find favour'.
2. So MS.B, which Markon prefers here; MS.A has וְיִזְכֶּרָה which is also possible if the negative is taken to refer only to שָׁכַח thus: 'should not forget her but help her'.

14. And it says AND BOAZ SAID TO HER AT MEALTIME. When the time to eat came he invited her to eat with them, for he was benevolent and generous with his money and his food in the manner of his former pious ancestors, and therefore she trusted him and she sat down and ate, for she was afraid that he might be angry with her if she did not eat.

It says AND DIP YOUR PIECE OF BREAD IN THE VINEGAR. Because it was summer and hot, they brought her vinegar to dip her piece of bread in the vinegar, and he gave her water to drink,<sup>1</sup> to cool herself.

And it says SHE SAT DOWN NEAR THE REAPERS for she had no right to sit with the men. This raises the matter of 'Charm is false and the beauty of women is vain' etc.,<sup>2</sup> and the matter of 'cows of Bashan' etc.,<sup>3</sup> 'because the daughters of Zion are haughty',<sup>4</sup> 'woe to the women who sew magic bands on all wrists'.<sup>5</sup>

And it says AND HE PASSED TO HER PARCHED GRAIN. She took ears of grain and roasted them in the fire, broke them and ate. Another interpretation of וַיַּצֵּב is that the teth is superfluous and it is the same as וַיַּצַּב (meaning) 'and he apportioned to her some parched grain'.

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1. I have here omitted the two words סוּמַךְ קָלִי, which are unintelligible in this context.
  2. Prov. xxxi 30.
  3. Amos iv 1.
  4. Is. iii 16 (Markon says iv 16).
  5. Ezek. xiii 18.

This parched grain was of barley and they ground it and put it in a bowl and poured water over it and it was mixed up, then they took it out and ate. Before the water is poured over it, it is called Carmel.

So this shows that he apportioned for her a quantity of parched grain and she ate and was satisfied and had some left over, both of the bread and of the grain.

15. AND SHE AROSE TO GLEAN. After she had eaten she hurried to her work and Boaz gave two orders to his men: 1. "EVEN BETWEEN THE SHEAVES" etc., and 2. "AND EVEN PULL OUT" etc. This was not the right of any gleaner or any poor man, for each one of the gleaners would have pity on himself in his own view, and so he said "EVEN AMONG THE SHEAVES LET HER GLEAN", and afterwards he mentioned what was proper for a gleaner and he said 'You shall leave her to glean' etc. To this he added for her EVEN AMONG THE SHEAVES LET HER GLEAN. This means 'Allow her to glean ears which are among the sheaves', for it is customary for reapers when they reap sheaves and wish to make bundles, that afterwards they make them into heaps and they let ears fall from their hands, and he instructed them that they should allow her to take these ears.

16. And it says PULL OUT FOR HER FROM THE BUNDLES. These were the sheaves which were stacked up one on top of the other like heaps, and there were among them ears with their heads sticking out from among the sheaves, and he instructed them that they should pull these out and bring them out from there and leave



them for her so that she should have a significant quantity.

And Ruth heard these instructions.

של חסליו (The verb is the same as in) 'Take off your shoes'.<sup>1</sup>

צבחים This is a plural noun and the singular is צבח, with a taw in place of a hé. They are called צבחים (bundles) because they are sheaves which are heaped and piled up,<sup>2</sup> one on top of the other.

17. And it says AND IT WAS ABOUT AN EPHAH OF BARLEY. This is as well as that which the young men had given her for it says 'and she beat out that which she had gleaned' etc.

18. And it says AND SHE GAVE HER THAT WHICH WAS LEFT OVER WHEN SHE WAS SATISFIED. You should add a word (and read) 'that which was left over after<sup>3</sup> she was satisfied'.

19. And it says AND HER MOTHER-IN-LAW SAID TO HER "WHERE DID YOU GLEAN TODAY?" etc. This means 'With whom did you glean?' And it says "AND WHERE DID YOU WORK?" That is, 'where did you beat it out and prepare it?' Another interpretation is 'Did you work in one field of one owner or in many fields?'

1. Ex. iii 5.

2. This is pure conjecture for Heb. צבחים ונפוחות for which words it is difficult to establish a meaning appropriate to this context.

3. He expands מאחר שבעה to משבעה.

And it says MAY HE WHO TOOK NOTICE OF YOU BE BLESSED.

She prayed for him although she did not know who he was, for he had done a great kindness and fulfilled a duty, as the scripture says 'You shall love the stranger'.<sup>1</sup>

And it says AND SHE TOLD HER MOTHER-IN-LAW WITH WHOM SHE HAD BEEN WORKING AND SHE SAID etc. She said to her about him that 'the man whom you have blessed, his name is Boaz'.

20. AND NAOMI SAID TO HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW. First she said 'May the man who took notice of you be blessed' - this was before she knew who he was - and afterwards, when she knew who he was, she said again "MAY HE BE BLESSED BY THE LORD".

It says WHO HAS NOT LEFT OFF HIS KINDNESS. This refers to God, to God, may his name be blessed, or it may refer to Boaz. And it says WITH THE LIVING. This refers to Naomi and Ruth. And it says WITH THE DEAD. This shows that Boaz had dealt kindly and truly with Elimelech and his sons, although they were dead, with the meaning that he dealt kindly with Naomi for the sake of the dead.

Then she made it known that he was their relative and that he was a redeemer for it is said THE MAN IS RELATED TO US etc. And it says HE IS ONE OF OUR REDEEMERS after it says 'the man is related to us' to show that he was of the father's family and not of the mother's family, and she informed her that "Boaz has

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1. Deut. x 19.

shown kindness to you for 2 reasons": 1. because Ruth was righteous and had shown kindness to Naomi, for it is said IT HAS CERTAINLY BEEN TOLD TO ME etc., and 2. because she had attached herself to Naomi and Naomi was a relative of Boaz.

21. AND RUTH THE MOABITE SAID "HE ALSO ..." etc. When she heard that she blessed him because he had treated her<sup>1</sup> kindly on one day, afterwards she made it known that "I must continue to go into his fields with his young women until the barley and the wheat (harvests) are finished".

22. AND NAOMI SAID TO RUTH HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW "IT IS GOOD, MY DAUGHTER". "For Boaz has spoken good counsel to you, that you should be with his young women, as he said to you "And thus shall you stay close to my young women"."

And it says AND THEY SHALL NOT TOUCH YOU IN ANOTHER FIELD. This means 'that they may not harm and treat you badly in another place'. It says בשדה אחר, and if it had said בשדה אחר it would refer to the field of another, but since it says בשדה אחר the reference is to the field in itself.

23. AND SHE STAYED WITH BOAZ'S YOUNG WOMEN. This shows that Ruth accepted the words of Boaz and the words of her mother-in-law, and did not go away from there until they had finished the harvest.

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1. The Hebrew actually reads: שעשנה עמו, which cannot be correct.

And without doubt Boaz was good to her in the same way as on the first day and she did not go to another place, and when she had finished, then she returned quickly to her mother-in-law, to be <sup>secluded</sup> secluded and hidden.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

1. AND NAOMI HER MOTHER-IN-LAW SAID TO HER "MY DAUGHTER.." etc. When she returned to dwell with her, then counsel came to Naomi's heart and she said in her heart that Boaz would certainly help Ruth with regard to being married, so she introduced the matter to her and said "My daughter, is it not now about time that I was seeking a settlement for you? I have been thinking about which man it would be right for you to marry, and now, behold, I know that it is Boaz who will help you, so take heed to the instructions which I am giving to you". And it says THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, "for I desire only that you should be happy with him".

2. AND NOW, IS NOT BOAZ WELL-KNOWN TO US? You should relate this phrase to HE IS WINNOWING. And it says WINNOWING. From this we derive two conclusions: 1. that in the first place she had studied Boaz's movements, even before she knew that on this night Ruth should go to him, and 2. it informs us that God blessed Israel with abundant crops in that year, since Boaz was not able to winnow the barley before he had finished harvesting the wheat. And it was near the customary time, of which the Torah speaks (when it says) 'When you make your ingathering from

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1. Or: 'chaste and modest'.

your threshing-floor and from your winepress'.<sup>1</sup>

It says מִדְּעָהוּ. This is an abstract noun - מִדְּעָה - of the same pattern as מוֹשָׁעָה. מוֹשָׁעָה and מִדְּעָה are both abstract nouns.

3. And it says AND WASH AND ANOINT YOURSELF. Naomi knew that Boaz had seen her many times and she did not do this in order to intensify his desire and to seduce him, but it was the custom of the people of early times to put on different kinds of ornament and dress for different businessses, so that if a woman were tending sheep or gleaning she would dress in garments which were appropriate for this work, for she does her work or business in front of all, in her coming and going, and everybody sees her and it would not be right for her to dress in fine and beautiful garments. When Ruth was seeking to be married to a man she put on clothes which were appropriate for this action, as Tamar did when 'she put on a veil'.<sup>2</sup> And Ruth did likewise when she put on her fine clothes and anointed herself, for she was seeking a redeemer and she came to him herself and did not send an agent to him on this errand, for she already trusted him and did not feel embarrassment with him, for he had spoken pleasant words to her at their first meeting and he was continually seeing her and speaking to her, for he was a pious old man, and

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1. Deut. xvi 13.

2. Gen. xxxviii 13.

therefore she came to him about her situation. Furthermore she did not have confidence (in an agent), for perhaps the agent would not know the situation well, nor how to arrange his words in order. And therefore she went so that she might hear what passed between them and act (for herself).

Another possibility is that she desired that the matter about Tob<sup>1</sup> the redeemer should not be known, and perhaps the agent would reveal this secret about Tob, and yet if Boaz decided to take her he would not hear the thing and she would be ashamed. And furthermore (Ruth chose to go in person) because a man feels embarrassed in the presence of the party concerned and grants his request, but he does not feel embarrassed with an agent of the party, when he hastens, on behalf of the petitioner, to see the man's face.

And it says AND PUT YOUR GARMENTS ON YOU. These garments were new ones which she made for herself at the time, or she borrowed them by request from the women, or she had had them formerly in Mahlon's lifetime.

And it says DO NOT BE KNOWN TO THE MAN etc. THE MAN is Boaz - 'so that he may not see you, and his heart will be occupied with business and also his heart will be merry without a thought'.

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1. 'Tob' is the name given to the redeemer by the Rabbis on the basis of iii 13 **אם יגאלך טוב** where **טוב** was taken to be a proper noun and the subject of the verb **יגאלך**.

And it says **וְסָכַח** (AND ANOINT YOURSELF) and it does not say **וְסָכַח**, as it says **וְשָׂמָה**, (in AND PUT YOUR GARMENTS ON YOU) because this **וְ** makes a closer connection between **וְסָכַח** and **וְרָחַצָה** which precedes it, and the phrase means 'Anoint yourself at the same time as you wash yourself'.

4. And it says AND MAY IT BE, WHEN HE LIES DOWN etc., to teach that there was no-one with him when he lay down, for if this were not the case she would have been ashamed to approach him, in front of someone else.

And it says AND UNCOVER HIS FEET AND LIE DOWN. It means 'uncover your face when<sup>1</sup> you lie down beside his feet', for it would not be right to remove the cover of his garments or his bed, but when she went to the threshing-floor she hid her face and in that place she uncovered her face.

And it says AND HE WILL TELL YOU. There are hidden things here, which her mother-in-law instructed her and the text does not interpret or explain to us what the things were. And she said to her "If you say this thing to him, he will tell you what to do, and whatever he says to you, do".

5. AND SHE SAID TO HER "ALL THAT YOU SAY TO ME I WILL DO". This shows that she accepted her words (in the same way) as she had behaved with her from the beginning, honouring her and obeying her words.

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1. The text has **וְעַשְׂהָ** which must be a corruption for **וְעָשָׂה**.

6. And it says AND SHE WENT DOWN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR etc. This<sup>1</sup> refers to 'Wash and anoint yourself' etc., but all of these things she had done before 'she went down to the threshing-floor'. Some say that when it says 'and she did' it refers to 'come and uncover his feet', but this is not possible for the following verse destroys this interpretation, that is, verse 7, where it says AND BOAZ ATE AND DRANK. Therefore I have interpreted AND SHE DID as meaning 'she washed and anointed herself' before she went down to the threshing-floor.<sup>2</sup>

It says SECRETLY, as it says 'by their secrets',<sup>3</sup> and it is because she said DO NOT BE KNOWN TO THE MAN.

It says AND SHE UNCOVERED HIS FEET. She uncovered his feet in order to make him stir and he awoke from his sleep. And this interpretation of וחגל does not square completely with that of וגלית מרגלחיו.<sup>4</sup>

8. IT CAME TO PASS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT etc. For she parted his feet and it hurt him and he trembled, for he was not accustomed to having someone sleep with him and he was afraid.

1. i.e. the statement 'and she did everything as her mother-in-law instructed her'.

2. i.e. he proposes to interpret וחגש as 'she had done'.

3. Ex. vii 11.

4. If my interpretation of this sentence is correct it would appear to be a secondary addition from a reader who has noticed that Salmon's comments on וגלית מרגלחיו (iii 4) and וחגל מרגלחיו (iii 7) are not in agreement. In the former place he suggests that Ruth is not actually to disturb Boaz's coverings, but in the latter she is represented as doing so.



And it says AND HE TURNED. He looked around to see who was at his feet and then he saw the form of a woman for he saw the ornaments on her garments and he smelt her perfumes, and from the scent of the perfume and from the clothes he recognized her (as a woman) but he did not know who she was, whether one of his maid-servants or a stranger and then he asked her who she was.

וַיִּלְפַּח : The same verb occurs in 'the paths of their ways turn aside'.<sup>1</sup>

9. AND HE SAID "WHO ARE YOU". This is abbreviated. I have found it says in the story of Rebekah 'Whose daughter are you?',<sup>2</sup> which is a close parallel, and it means that Boaz said 'Whose daughter are you', but the word (daughter) is omitted and she replied to him "Ruth" and nothing else.<sup>3</sup> But in the case of Eleazar the answer is complete, from beginning to end, for it says 'And she said "I am the daughter of Bethuel ..." etc., "And I put the ring ..." etc.<sup>4</sup>

AND SHE SAID "I AM RUTH YOUR MAIDSERVANT", meaning 'You will take me as your wife', for it says below FOR YOU ARE A REDEEMER, and thus he also said NOT TO GO AFTER YOUNG MEN etc.

1. יִלְפַח אֲרָחוֹה דְרָכָם. Job vi 18.

2. Gen. xxiv 23, 47.

3. i.e. she did not say 'Ruth, daughter of so-and-so'.

4. Gen. xxiv 47.

10. AND HE SAID "MAY YOU BE BLESSED BY THE LORD, MY DAUGHTER".  
For she had sought to raise up the memory of the deceased Mahlon.

And it says "YOUR LATTER KINDNESS (is greater) THAN THE FORMER, for you have done a greater kindness to the deceased than you did formerly when you were with him in honesty and faith, and (greater than) when you listened to your mother-in-law. Another interpretation is 'You desire an old man', and the 'former' is 'what you did for your mother-in-law'. Another interpretation is 'You have slept here before so that you did not go to glean in another field and you have taken this upon yourself by your kindness'. But the first (explanation) is the most probable.

And it says NOT TO GO AFTER YOUNG MEN. We can draw three conclusions from this: 1. as I have said above, and 2. that Boaz was old, and 3. as the young man seeks a young woman, so it is customary for the young woman to seek a young man. But this Ruth was righteous, she desired a pious old man and not a young man.

11. And it says AND NOW, MY DAUGHTER, DO NOT FEAR. This teaches that Boaz knew that all the men, every one of them, longed to marry her.

And it says FOR ALL THE GATE OF MY PEOPLE KNOWS. He said to her that "all the men of the city know that you are a woman of worth, and every single one desires to marry you, and I, too, desire you".

12 - 13. AND NOW, WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT I AM A REDEEMER.  
He replied to her using the word she had used above, 'for you

are a redeemer'. And he said to her "But if you desire a redeemer, behold there is a redeemer nearer than I and it would only be right for me, or anyone else, to marry you after that redeemer has heard from you", for it says AND IF HE DOES NOT WISH TO REDEEM etc. Naomi, too, knew that it was so and yet it says 'and he will tell you', (meaning) that 'he will help you in this matter and he will hurry with all his might to assemble the elders (saying) "she was our brother's wife"', and afterwards he said to her "Do not think in your heart that if he refuses you I, too, will refuse you. No, for I rejoice greatly in this thing". And afterwards he swore to her that he would hurry in this matter and would complete it for he said "I WILL REDEEM YOU".

And it says LIE DOWN UNTIL THE MORNING. Another interpretation<sup>1</sup> is that he said to her "Lodge (here) tonight" so that she would not be frightened or embarrassed at the time when she saw that he was afraid. And afterwards he said to her "LIE DOWN UNTIL THE MORNING" to cheer her up and to give her heart so that she should not become preoccupied with her thoughts, as he surely said "By your life, I will do all that you desire and it will be well, so do not trouble yourself with thoughts".

It says TO REDEEM YOU (לגאֹלךְ). This comes from the infinitive which is גאֹל,<sup>2</sup> as כְּקִרְבָּכֶם comes from קִרְבֵּי which is the infinitive.

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1. Something must have dropped out of the text at this point.
  2. The text has גאֹל which, it would seem, is probably a misprint.

14. And it says AND SHE SLEPT AT HIS FEET UNTIL MORNING.

Know that 'morning' is the beginning of the dawn, for it says  
AND SHE AROSE BEFORE A MAN COULD RECOGNIZE HIS NEIGHBOUR.

And the end of 'morning' is sunrise.

And it says LET IT NOT BE KNOWN THAT THE WOMAN CAME TO  
THE THRESHING-FLOOR, so that the affair should not be known  
and thereby reach Tob and become the cause of his refusal of  
her, (on the grounds) that she did not go to him but went to  
Boaz.

15. And it says BRING YOUR SCARF. See his generosity, for  
he did not wish (her) to return to Naomi empty-handed, and he  
measured for her six of barley and gave it to her. And it  
says SIX BARLEY. It cannot have been (six) kilags,<sup>1</sup> for her  
scarf would not hold this, but it would have been about 2 kilags  
and a quarter. And it says BARLEY for in that threshing-floor  
there was only barley, for he was threshing barley at the  
threshing-floor and he gave her the threshed barley, for it says  
'to lie down at the end of the heap'. And there are some who  
say that he measured six (measures of) barley in order to illustrate  
the perfect tithe, but this is not likely.

And it says AND HE WENT TO THE CITY: the subject is Boaz.  
He left his work and went at that time to the city in her interest,

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1. כִּילָגָה. Lane's Arabic - English Lexicon defines كيلة  
as a measure used in Iraq and equivalent to five and three-  
quarter pounds.

even though it might be that Tob would marry her.<sup>1</sup> And although (this might happen) he made haste totally in her interest, (regardless of) whether Tob or he should marry her, as he had sworn to her.

It says **הָבִי** (BRING). The imperative is **הִבֵּה**, in the plural **הִבְּוּ**, and **הָבִי** is the same as **הִנֵּי** (give). Another view .....<sup>2</sup> Another view is that the imperative is **הִבֵּה** as in 'Give me my wife',<sup>3</sup> and **הָבִי** is the feminine form.

And it says **וְאֶחָזִי בָהּ** (AND HOLD IT OUT) and not **וְאֶחָזִי** like **אֶחָזִי** in 'Catch us the foxes'<sup>4</sup> or **אֶהָבִי** in 'Love the Lord',<sup>5</sup> and it is right for it comes from **אֶחָזִי**,<sup>6</sup> which is the infinitive; thus **וְאֶחָזִי** is a form similar to **וְאֶשְׁקֹלָהּ**,<sup>7</sup> the infinitive is **אֶחָזִי**.

16. And it says AND SHE CAME TO HER MOTHER-IN-LAW AND SHE SAID "WHO ARE YOU, MY DAUGHTER?" When Ruth knocked at the door, Naomi said "Who are you, my daughter?" And the writer omits to say 'I am Ruth'. Another interpretation of WHO ARE YOU, MY DAUGHTER is that it means 'Are you (still) a widow, or has he

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1. This appears to be the sense of a piece of rather obscure Hebrew: **וְאֶפִּילוּ אִם הִיא יִקְחָהּ אֶלָּא טוֹב**. The sentence which follows this may originally have been a gloss on this difficult passage.
  2. This second comment on **הָבִי** seems totally confused and defies translation. Heb.: **ד"א הָבִי מְצֻדֵּר נִחַן חֲחֵן וְאֶלָּא חֲסֵר**.
  3. Gen. xxix 21.
  4. Song ii 15.
  5. Ps. xxxi 24.
  6. Emending **אֶחָזִי** for **אֶחָזִי**.
  7. Ezra viii 25, where MT actually has **וְאֶשְׁקֹלָהּ**.

completed for you what you desired?' And she told her what the man had promised her, for it says AND SHE TOLD HER etc.

And it says ALL THAT HE HAD DONE FOR HER, that is, what he had promised. And it says HAD DONE, for he promised truly, and that was as if he had done it. Do you not see that he made haste about the matter and did not delay?

17 - 18. AND SHE SAID "THESE SIX BARLEY" etc.

AND SHE SAID "STAY, MY DAUGHTER" etc.

And it says HOW THE THING WILL FALL, (meaning) whether it will be undertaken by Tob or by him.

And it says FOR THE MAN WILL NOT REST, "for I know his piety and his generosity and he will not delay". And Naomi hurried in this matter for 4 reasons:<sup>1</sup> 1. in order to provide *and* a rest from her sorrows for Ruth and to make her happy with a man as she said "My daughter, shall I not seek a rest for you" etc., and 2. perhaps God would give her a son who would succeed to the name of her dead son. But Boaz liked to hurry in this matter on account of his kindness and for no other reason. And if he was doing it out of love of matrimony, he would take a woman from his relatives, from the important families and the wealthy nobles, and he would not ally himself to a humble convert. And Ruth the righteous did all these things because she desired to be with her mother-in-law in whatever circumstances befell her and she listened to her words to gladden Naomi's heart for (she said)<sup>2</sup>

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1. But he only enumerates two reasons. He may have meant to say there were four reasons in all: Naomi had two, Boaz and Ruth one each.
  2. Something is required here to form a connection between the 1st person singular of the following clause and the 3rd person which precedes.

"I am carrying out your words". And all this stemmed from the greatness of her love for her, to give her what she desired.

## IV.

1. AND BOAZ WENT UP TO THE GATE AND SAT THERE. He sat down in the gate, for this can only be the gate of judgement. And he did not speak until Tob passed by; and when Tob passed by he said to him "TURN ASIDE, SIT DOWN HERE", meaning "come and sit down with me".

And it says פלני אלמני (SO-AND-SO). That is Tob, his name and surname. Or, .....<sup>1</sup> Another possible meaning is 'Sit here until certain elders<sup>2</sup> come'; that they are elders of the city is implicit in the name.

And it says AND HE TURNED ASIDE AND SAT DOWN. Tob heard his words and did not go on his way. And in this his righteousness and his good manners are increased. It says יסור (HE TURNED ASIDE): its imperative is הסר, like השע, השב. And it does not say ויסר, the imperative of which is סור like ויער,<sup>3</sup> which has the imperative הער when it stands alone.

2. AND HE TOOK TEN MEN etc. He took elders so that this matter

1. Apparently an alternative explanation of the phrase פלני אלמני, the sentence which follows is unintelligible. Heb.: או היה שמו: האחר ויחסו (ויחשו) אצל הדור אשר ידע ממנו.

2. הזקנים הפלנים.

3. Ju. iv 21.

might be settled by them like a lawsuit or a marriage or such.  
And he said to them "SIT HERE", AND THEY SAT DOWN. They obeyed  
his words.

3. And he said TO THE REDEEMER, "THE PORTION OF THE FIELD ..."  
etc. See Boaz's wisdom, for he did not mention Ruth at the  
outset, but he mentioned only the field. Only if he (the redeemer)  
would wish to redeem the field would he mention Ruth to him.

NAOMI, WHO HAS RETURNED<sup>1</sup> FROM THE FIELD OF MOAB, HAS SOLD  
THE FIELD. It is right that Naomi should have sold the field  
when she returned from the field of Moab, and God imposed the  
obligation to redeem it on the redeemer as it is said 'His redeemer  
who is related to him shall come' etc.<sup>2</sup> And it says NAOMI HAS SOLD  
after it says WHICH WAS OUR BROTHER ELIMELECH'S, for Naomi inherited  
from her sons, for the mother inherits from the sons if they do  
not themselves leave sons. And when Elimelech died his sons,  
namely Mahlon and Chilion, inherited the field and when Mahlon and  
Chilion died childless, Naomi inherited the land. And when she  
was in need of sustenance she sold it, for it is said 'if your  
brother becomes poor and sells part of his holdings' etc.<sup>2</sup>

Another view is that the field belonged to Mahlon and Chilion  
and the mother does not inherit, but it was Naomi's dowry and  
the dowry could not be included with other property and she sold  
the field to take the dowry. And when the purchaser took the

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1. Correction based on MT. The text here has **השבה** for **השדה** MT.

2. Lev. xxv 25.



produce which it gave, then the field would return to Mahlon and Chilion, as the Torah enjoins.

Another view of NAOMI HAS SOLD is that (the ownership) of the field remained suspended until they saw what should become of Ruth, whether a child should be born to her who would inherit the property of Mahlon and Chilion or not. And this seems likely to me, for it says 'In the day that you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, and Ruth the Moabite' etc., to teach that Ruth also had an interest and a right to see what would come forth from her. And thus it says 'A son is born to Naomi' and he is the heir.

4. And it says AND I SAID I WILL UNCOVER YOUR EARS SAYING etc. He informed him "I have assembled the elders on your behalf, to uncover your ears, for you come first in order of redemption, and I am obliged to uncover your ears, for it would not be right for me to buy before you. If you are willing, buy! And if you are not willing, I come after you in order of redemption".

Know that Mahlon and Chilion had no brothers, but Tob was their uncle, their father's brother, and Boaz was the son of another uncle. And the uncle takes precedence over the cousin in inheritance and redemption, as it is said 'Or his uncle or his cousin' etc.<sup>1</sup> But this order does not apply in the redemption of women or in levirate marriage, for it is forbidden for an uncle to marry the wife of his brother's son, (which includes

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1. Lev. xxv 49.

his cousin's son),<sup>1</sup> but this does apply to the redemption of a field and to inheritance, for the uncle is obliged to inherit and to redeem before the cousin, as we have said above 'or his uncle' etc. But this verse does not refer to levirate marriage. And therefore (that obligation) does not apply, for Tob was Elimelech's brother and the uncle of Mahlon and Chilion.

Or they (may have) had a custom in redemption that one uncle should have precedence over another if one was greater than the other, either in years or in wealth. This is the case with brothers or cousins or other redeemers or levirs; the 'greater' took precedence. And according to this interpretation Elimelech would have been Boaz's uncle, his father's brother. So Boaz was a cousin<sup>2</sup> of Mahlon and Chilion, and Tob and Boaz were actual brothers, but Tob was older than Boaz and therefore he took precedence<sup>3</sup> over Boaz in redemption. Or, Tob was a closer relative than Boaz because Tob was a cousin<sup>4</sup> of Mahlon and Chilion,

1. This appears to be the sense of יוֹסֵף בֶּן־חָמִיץ 'מע. Markon (p.14, n.15) identifies this word as ἀνεψιότεκνος - 'the child of a cousin', but it is properly a transliteration of τοῦ ἀνεψιοῦ του (= αὐτου) 'of his cousin's son'.
2. The word here is יָפֵלְטָרָא = ἐξάδελφι which is a colloquial form of \*ἐξαδέλφιον, a diminutive of ἐξάδελφος, and not the usual Hebrew locution יָדָא-יָבָא.
3. Another Greek word κρημνιότατος, which Markon (p.14, n.18) identifies as προθυμότερος - 'more ready, willing, eager', but, since it is unlikely that teth should represent theta, it should rather be read προτιμότερα - 'more preferable'. The aleph on the end (he in MS. A) makes it a feminine adjective qualifying ηὐλα.
4. Here the word is יָפֵלְטָרָא = ἐξάδελφος.

and Boaz was a second cousin.<sup>1</sup>

And it says BEFORE THOSE WHO SIT - that is, the elders:  
AND BEFORE THE ELDERS OF MY PEOPLE - these are the witnesses,  
or it could be the reverse.

And it says AND IF HE WILL NOT REDEEM, and it does not  
say 'if you will not redeem', for Boaz had turned to look at  
the elders and he said to them "If Tob does not wish to redeem",  
(and) they told him what the law required. And afterwards he  
looked at Tob and said to him "TELL ME". Another view is that  
there was another redeemer there besides Tob and he said "If there  
is no-one there who will redeem apart from you and me, tell me".  
And then Tob said "I WILL REDEEM".

5. AND BOAZ SAID "ON THE DAY YOU BUY THE FIELD" etc., and it  
says "AND FROM RUTH THE MOABITE": (this means) 'from<sup>2</sup> Ruth you  
take the field and also FROM THE HAND OF NAOMI, and it is necessary  
and seemly that you take it and that you take the wife of the dead  
to raise up (his name) on his inheritance. For if you take the  
field from the hand of Naomi and from the hand of Ruth, it is  
seemly and necessary that you also take Ruth so that the son who  
comes from you may inherit this land'. And thus it says WHEN YOU  
BUY THE FIELD FROM THE HAND OF NAOMI AND FROM RUTH THE MOABITE THE  
WIFE OF THE DEAD YOU BUY as a wife.<sup>3</sup>

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1.  $\text{וְיִשְׁלַח בּוֹאֵז} = \text{δισεξάδελφος}.$

2. Salmon here retains the  $\text{נַמְנָם}$  of MT, presumably understanding it in this way.

3. Omitting  $\text{וְיִשְׁלַח בּוֹאֵז} \text{ קִנִּי 'ע'}$  with MS A.

And it says THE NAME OF THE DEAD for the son who comes from Ruth will be in place of the dead and he will receive all his property for he is as his son, and it does not mean that it is right to call sons of a levirate marriage by the name of the deceased, for this one is called Obed and not Mahlon.

6. AND THE REDEEMER SAID "I CANNOT REDEEM FOR MYSELF".

This means "I am not able to marry Ruth in case I destroy my inheritance".

"AND NOW, REDEEM FOR YOURSELF, YOU, MY (RIGHT OF) REDEMPTION".

This means: "you, take the field, for I cannot redeem the field except by marrying Ruth, and now I cannot (do that)". And he said I CANNOT twice: (a) of Ruth, and (b) of the field. Another view is that the whole verse is said in reference to Ruth. And when he said 'I cannot' the first time, it refers to his own impediment, and the second time he is transferring the obligation to Boaz. And he said to him, "It is right and proper that you should redeem, for I am not able to redeem myself. You are a redeemer after me and there is no obstacle to you as there is to me".

It says LEST I DESTROY MY INHERITANCE, for Tob had divided his property among his sons and he wished to avoid giving himself (further) trouble. And he said further, "If I marry Ruth and have a son by her, he will inherit like my sons, and there is nothing to give him, and I shall go back and destroy what I have settled on my sons, for they shall go back to the beginning and have equal shares". And this seems likely to me.

Another view: Tob was poor and knew that he would not be able to marry Ruth unless he got a loan or sold something from

his estate, for he had children and daughters to support and he would have to support Ruth too. And he would not be able to endure this; if he married her, he would be destroying his estate.

Another view: he knew that his first wife would not like this and would say "Divorce me, for I am not pleased with this trouble which you taken on", and he would be obliged to destroy his estate and they would come into great contentions and disputes.

So Tob said "I do not wish to marry Ruth, not because I hate or despise her, but because of a great obstacle and it would not be right for me to marry her before Israel, and therefore I should be exempted from halitzah. Already you know the impediment which I have, and for any man who is impeded by an obstacle there is no halitzah or spitting. But you have no impediment, so take the field along with Ruth".

7. AND THIS FORMERLY IN ISRAEL. This introductory phrase teaches that what Tob did was a former practice which was in Israel before the time of Moses, for then the generations were agreed and were pleased with this thing, that the shoe should be used in transactions and oaths as men used to like to have a heap of stones, or a pillar as witnesses between them, as Laban and Jacob did with the heap of stones and the pillar, although they were not living beings.

3 things are mentioned in this verse and they are REDEMPTION, EXCHANGE, TO ESTABLISH ANYTHING. REDEMPTION is the redemption of houses and fields and vineyards and women, and EXCHANGE is, in the case of Boaz, when Tob was the redeemer

and Boaz changed places with him. There is also an exchange when a man buys something and sanctifies it to a priest or to the poor; an exchange is made for it, for it is right that it should be ransomed. And it says TO ESTABLISH ANYTHING. That is, in marrying women and other things, as in the case of a man who wishes to appoint officials and overseers, the one making the appointment has to take off his shoe in front of witnesses and give it to him to establish the matter. Another view of TO ESTABLISH ANYTHING (is that it refers) to redemption and exchange but nothing else, but the former seems (more) likely to me.

AND THIS WAS TESTIMONY IN ISRAEL. It teaches that this was the manner of giving witness in Israel, because this custom was always observed in Israel as a religious duty. Another view: in this action the testimony is established, for it is like testimony against the man who draws off his shoe.

8. AND THE REDEEMER SAID TO BOAZ "BUY FOR YOURSELF" etc.

9. AND BOAZ SAID TO THE ELDERS.

10. AND ALSO RUTH THE MOABITE etc. At the time when Tob drew off his shoe and gave it to Boaz the judges knew that it was appropriate for Tob to hand over to Boaz, and then Boaz said to the elders and to everybody, "Witness for me that I have bought the whole of the inheritance of the dead along with the wife of Mahlon". And from this verse I know three<sup>1</sup> things: 1. It is

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1. The numeral is missing from the text, but three points are enumerated.

right that a man should begin to do a deed of kindness at the time when he can accomplish it, and he should not hold himself back if he sees the other man hindered by an obstacle or something else, and 2. that it is right to say out of one's own interest "Witness for me in such and such", for one who stands silent will have no protection and 3. that it was customary for the buying and selling of any property (to be effected) by exchange,<sup>1</sup> but houses<sup>2</sup> and land and women are only bought for their owners with witnesses and a document.

If you examine the essentials of (dealing in) property, you will find they are in two parts. The first relates to anybody who wishes to buy a slave or a woman or houses or fields or vineyards; these can only be bought in the presence of witnesses and with a document, for if at any time the basis of the purchase is questioned the document and the witnesses may be produced and there is no need for an oath in this case. And the second (part deals with) anyone who buys animals or utensils or gold or silver or food or drink or the like. These can be bought by their purchasers without witnesses and without a document; simply by agreement of the two parties and by weighing of the price. But an oath is necessary in this case at the

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1. The text reads **בחלוף הבתים** which gives no sense and it would appear that **הבתים** has been misplaced from the phrase immediately following.
  2. Transposed from previous clause (see above). Women, houses and land are grouped together as forming one class of property deal in the following passage (in the next line of the Hebrew text).

time of the exchange.

We have two further points in connection with women:

1. if a woman is suspected of something, whether truly or falsely, she shall only be saved by an oath, and then the woman shall be acquitted at the time when she drinks the water of the suspected adulteress<sup>1</sup> and it does her no harm. And 2. (there is the case of) the woman in whom virginity is not found. But in this case there is no need for an oath for God has placed in her (signs of) her virginity, that is virginal blood, for if the man says 'I came to her and did not find virginity in her',<sup>2</sup> then it says 'they shall spread the garment' etc.,<sup>3</sup> and if she had virginity she is saved, and if not she is killed for it is said 'if the thing is true' etc. .... 'they shall bring the young woman out' etc.<sup>4</sup> (The signs of) virginity are like the document and the witnesses. And if she was deflowered by accident<sup>5</sup> and she had no witnesses that it was an accident, she is (considered to be) protecting herself and she is killed and her blood is upon her own neck.

And further we learn from this business that it is proper to mention what one is buying in such a way as to make it plain before the witnesses.

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1. Heb. שוטה for the more usual סוטה.
  2. Deut. xxii 14.
  3. ibid v.17.
  4. ibid vv.20, 22.
  5. Lit.: 'struck by wood' - מוכה עץ. This expression is also used in the Mishnah, Yebamoth VI 4, Kethuboth I 3, 7.



It says TO THE ELDERS AND TO ALL THE PEOPLE as it says above 'before those who sit and before the elders of my people'; these are mentioned at the beginning and at the end.

And it says YOU ARE WITNESSES THIS DAY twice.<sup>1</sup> Once at the beginning of the speech and once at the end. The former is a testimony about the field and the second, the latter,<sup>2</sup> is a testimony to the taking of Ruth. And there is no division between his introduction of the witnesses and the words (addressed) to the witnesses.

And it says "THAT I HAVE BOUGHT ALL THAT WAS ELIMELECH'S etc., and above it says 'the portion of the field which was our brother Elimelech's', because it was . . . . .<sup>3</sup>

Another view: at first it belonged to their father and afterwards his sons inherited it. And Chilion is mentioned before Mahlon, although Chilion was the younger because Mahlon was . . . . .<sup>4</sup>

And it says TO RAISE UP THE NAME OF THE DEAD etc., to teach that if he took Ruth the name of the dead would remain on the estate which was in Boaz's hands until the son should come and the estate should be his.

1. Heb. פַּעַמִּים . Either the numeral ב has dropped out or the word is to be read as a dual.

2. Heb. הַאֲחֵרֹן is clearly an error for הַאֲחֵרֹן.

3. Heb.: בַּעֲבוּר כִּי הָיָה מַחְלוֹן וְכִלְיוֹן דָּבָר  
יְרוּשָׁה אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָרְשׁוּ מֵאֲבִיהֶם אִם יְרוּשָׁה  
מִמָּקוֹם אֲחֵר אִם מִצָּאָה.

This is very unclear. It may be an attempt to say that the text mentions 'all that was Mahlon's and Chilion's' as well as 'all that was Elimelech's' because the sons had owned property which had been acquired by other means than inheritance from their father.

4. The text is clearly defective at this point.

And it says AND THE NAME OF THE DEAD SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF FROM (AMONG) HIS BROTHERS etc. It is as the widow who is seeking levirate marriage says 'My brother-in-law refuses to raise up his brother's name in Israel',<sup>1</sup> and it says 'who will not build up his brother's house'.<sup>2</sup> And if anyone says that this case has nothing to do with the context of 'when brothers dwell together' etc.,<sup>3</sup> for the word yibum is not mentioned here and also the word ge'ullah is not mentioned there, I will explain that there is no distinction between these two categories. For if it said in the context of 'when brothers dwell', 'her redeemer shall come to her and he shall enter into levirate marriage', the prohibited incest would be lawful according to your words, for perhaps this woman is his cousin's wife and he is his cousin's redeemer and his 'sister-in-law' is his sister. And the same applies to all the rest of the relatives with whom marriage is prohibited. And therefore it says 'her yabam shall come to her', and it does not say 'her go'el', for it would not always be right for a go'el to come to his 'sister-in-law', for she might happen to be his sister or another prohibited relative. But the one who is obligated, on whom God has imposed the obligation to come to her, is the yabam. Therefore every yabam is a go'el, but not every go'el is a yabam. And it says 'her yabam who is with her',

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1. Deut. xxv 7.

2. ibid v.9.

3. ibid v.5.

as it says 'Go to your brother's wife and be her yabam',<sup>1</sup>  
 or 'my yabam is not willing'.<sup>2</sup> And the word yibum is not  
 mentioned here, and the word ge'ullah is not mentioned in the  
 passage 'when brothers dwell'. And in this book the language  
 of ge'ullah is used because the field is also bound up with the  
 marriage of Ruth, for the word yibum does not apply to field,  
 but the word ge'ullah applies both to fields and to women.  
 And another point is that Mahlon and Chilion had no go'el to whom  
 Ruth was prohibited thus requiring mention of the word yibum.

QUESTION: Why is the halitzah of the shoe not mentioned in this  
 connection, as it is mentioned in the Torah?

ANSWER: Because when it says in the Torah 'and she shall pull  
 off his shoe',<sup>3</sup> it is an obligation which is imposed at the time  
 when the yabam says 'I have no desire to take her', but he has no  
 impediment or obstacle. But Tob said 'I have no desire to take  
 her', but then his obstacle comes in and it is made clear that it  
 was because of a great obstacle that he did this, as it says  
 'lest I destroy my inheritance', and because of this the halitzah  
 of the shoe was not imposed on him.

And if you say that when it says 'If brothers dwell together'  
 it means true brothers, (I) say to you that it also says here

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1. Gen. xxxviii 8.

2. Deut. xxv 7.

3. ibid v.9.

'our brother Elimelech', which is (an actual) brother according to your view, and this is wrong. And if you say that when it says 'If brothers dwell together', it is an exception to the general principle of 'the nakedness of your brother's wife',<sup>1</sup> in the same way that it says 'and on the day of the Sabbath two lambs',<sup>2</sup> which is an exception to the general principle of 'you shall not do any work',<sup>3</sup> I say I will show you a distinction between the two, based on two meanings (of the word 'brother').

When it says 'and on the sabbath day', it is not like when it says 'you shall not do any work', for it does not say 'and on the sabbath day do work', but it says 'you shall not do any work', and the general principle is 'any work'. And afterwards it says 'and on the sabbath day two lambs', and it modifies and distinguishes so as to leave out one specific thing. And from this we know that this is something separate from the statement 'you shall not do any work', and it is a particular exception to the general principle. But when it says 'the nakedness of your brother's wife', 'when brothers dwell together' is nothing like it but it is the opposite, for when it says 'the nakedness of your brother's wife', we have clear evidence that it means specifically a brother and no-one else. And this does not conform with the practice of the Tannaim who treat (the later texts) as exceptions

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1. Lev. xviii 16.

2. Num. xxviii 9: Markon's footnote reads erroneously xxix 9.

3. Ex. xx 10.

to the general principle of the earlier texts.<sup>1</sup> For it says 'on the sabbath you shall not do any work' with the exception that 'on the sabbath day two lambs', and this is not work but a religious duty, as it says 'any work you shall not do in them'. But it does not say in this way 'the nakedness of your brother's wife', except (for the case of) 'when brothers dwell together', to make a specific exception to the general principle; for when it says 'nakedness of your brother's wife' it is a specific case, and it is known that he is an actual brother, and when it says 'if brothers dwell together' it is the statement of a general principle, for in our language the word 'brother' is capable of several meanings, and in these places it is used in different ways. And it is not right to make of a general statement an exception to a specific statement, but this would happen according to your view if it were (the case that) 'when brothers dwell' is an exception to 'nakedness of your brother's wife', (or) if it were not the case in our language and in the commandments that 'brother' can mean something other than a true brother. And as I have found, the word 'brother' has a range of meanings, from that which it has in 'if brothers dwell together' to that which it has in 'the nakedness of your brother's wife'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Heb.: ואין זה מנהג החנאים היוצאים מכלל הראשונים

If my interpretation is correct Salmon is here attributing to the Tannaim the view (which he opposes) that the Exodus and Leviticus passages are statements of general principles and the Numbers and Deuteronomy passages are exceptions to these general principles, on the grounds that the former appear, respectively, before the latter in the arrangement of the Pentateuch. His own view is that the law against incest in Leviticus is, in fact, the exception to the general principle of levirate marriage.

2. The language and syntax of this sentence (Hebrew text p.17 lines 10, 11) are not very clear but it seems to express this idea.

And another thing: when it says 'on the sabbath day' it is a matter of an obligation and a commandment, and whoever changes this commandment incurs the penalty of death, as he who does forbidden work on the sabbath incurs the penalty of death. But whoever changes the commandments of levirate marriage, his punishment is not as the punishment of one who uncovers the 'nakedness of your brother's wife', for one is a duty and the other is an option. And another thing is that God said 'the nakedness of your brother's wife' etc. And if you say that this means while he (her husband) is among the living, are not all married women forbidden (to other men) during the lifetime of their husbands? And furthermore, God has continually and always forbidden cohabitation between the brother and the brother's wife, for it says 'she is your brother's nakedness'.<sup>1</sup> It means 'after his death', and there is no distinction between incest which is forbidden to a woman during the lifetime of her husband and (that which is forbidden to her) when she is a widow or divorced. And if it is not right to say this, perhaps you will give me some grounds (for thinking otherwise), but there is great evidence (for my view).

11. AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WERE IN THE GATE SAID. This shows that when Boaz testified to the elders and to all the people at the time when Tob took off his shoe and gave it to Boaz, as it is

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1. Lev. xviii 16. The quotation is here given wrongly as ערוה אשה אחיו היא the אשה should be omitted.

written above, then all the elders and the people answered and said "We are witnesses for you", and afterwards they prayed for him and said to him "May the Lord make this woman" etc.

Another view is that, by using the word 'witnesses', the narrator is saying that the complete body of all the people who were sitting with the elders, all of whom were witnesses, said to him "the Lord make this young woman" etc. They blessed him at first because of Ruth, and afterwards they blessed him for the increase of his seed.

And it says LIKE RACHEL AND LIKE LEAH. In this it speaks figuratively about two things: 1. the large number of good and pleasant things, and 2. the large number of descendants, for when it says THE TWO OF WHOM BUILT it includes these two things as we have said.

And it says AND MAKE STRENGTH IN EPHRATHAH. It explains the meaning of their saying to him 'the two of whom built', for sons and riches are the strength of men as the son is the strength of the father.

12. And it says AND MAY YOUR HOUSE BE. (That is to say) 'may your families be increased like Perez', for in the first statement they mentioned the origin of the tribes, and in the second statement they mentioned the house of Perez, for Boaz was one of his descendants. And it says TAMAR BORE, because Tamar also was a female ancestor of Boaz and he was a descendant of hers.

And it says THE LORD WILL GIVE YOU FROM THIS YOUNG WOMAN. 'For this blessing will be in the seed which the Lord will give you by Ruth'. It was a custom with them to bless the bridegroom

in this manner.

13. And it says AND BOAZ TOOK RUTH, and it says AND GOD GAVE HER CONCEPTION etc. For she had been barren with Mahlon, but when she came together with Boaz she was given conception on account of Boaz and Ruth and Naomi, for this son belonged to the three of them. Another view is that God gave her conception in the very night that he came to her.

14. AND THE WOMEN SAID TO NAOMI etc. And it says WHO HAS NOT LEFT YOU WITHOUT A REDEEMER. This means 'a redeemer who is steadfast and faithful, just as you have been affectionate'.

And it says MAY HIS NAME BE CALLED IN ISRAEL. This means: 'May you have power, and greatness, and honour, and a great name', as it says 'Let my name be called in them'.<sup>1</sup>

15. And it says HE WILL BE A RESTORER OF LIFE TO YOU. He will comfort you for the death of your sons, for in him their name will be heard and he will be in their place and their estate. And know that some say that the son of a levirate marriage inherits the property of the deceased. Another view is that the relative of the deceased is a son of the house of so and so, wife of so and so, but he does not inherit the estate of the deceased.

And it says TO SUSTAIN YOUR OLD AGE. At the time when you are old he will sustain you as your sons from your own loins would have done.

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1. Gen. xlviii 16.



And it says FOR YOUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW WHO LOVES YOU HAS BORNE HIM. It is true, what they said, that Ruth was more to Naomi than her sons, for she parted from her relations and followed Naomi on account of love of God and love for her. It says אַהֲבָתְךָ (SHE LOVES YOU). If its imperative were אַהֲבֵי, it would be אַהֲבָתְךָ like גְּמִלְתָּהּ, גְּמִלְתָּךְ. And if the meaning were 'your love' it would be written with sere - אַהֲבָתְךָ, which is formed from אַהֲבָה, as חֲפֻצָּתְךָ and יִרְאָתְךָ are formed from חֲפֻצָּה and יִרְאָה, and שְׂפִלְתָּךְ, שְׂפִלְתָּהּ from שְׂפִלָּה, therefore its imperative is אַהֲבֵי, feminine אַהֲבֵי, and the past is אַהֲבָתְךָ like שְׂמַרְתָּךְ.

And it says WHO IS BETTER TO YOU THAN SEVEN SONS, for because she loves you thus, she is better to you than seven sons. And this is the reverse of the bad times referred to in the verse 'the son treats his father with contempt'.<sup>1</sup> Another interpretation is that she is better than 7 sons, for she serves you and honours you. And when it says 'than 7 sons' and also when it says in connection with Elkanah 'than ten sons',<sup>2</sup> it does not refer to the actual number but it is used as a superlative, for when it says 'than 7 sons' it is a round number, as it says 'the barren woman has borne seven',<sup>3</sup> 'she who bore seven has languished';<sup>4</sup> a similar expression is 'a thousand pieces of silver',<sup>5</sup> and there

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1. Mic. vii 6, which continues 'the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'.
  2. I Sam. i 8.
  3. I Sam. ii 5.
  4. Jer. xv 9.
  5. Gen. xx 16.

are many other examples.

16. AND NAOMI TOOK THE CHILD. When he came from his mother's womb, she took him and brought him up and he was with her continually. And it says AND SHE WAS HIS NURSE, continually, until the lad was grown up.

17. AND THE NEIGHBOURS CALLED HIM A NAME. Know that the first 'and they called' is the same as the second, but it is added to lengthen the statement. Another view is that the first 'and they called' means they called him 'son of Naomi', and the second 'and they called' means they called him by the name Obed.

And it says HE WAS THE FATHER OF JESSE, to teach that Obed was the father of Jesse and that this name Obed remained his name continuously and was not changed, for sometimes the father gives a name to his son, or his mother, or it is a stranger who gives him a name like the neighbours who called him Obed, and if it was by the wishes of the parents, the name would never be changed.

And it says A SON IS BORN TO NAOMI. This shows the strength of our words that Obed would be to her in place of her son.

And it says FATHER OF DAVID. It is complete. And behold the verse refers to David, who is famous in the scripture and who was the first of the kings when they arose from Judah, and afterwards it shows us that he was a descendant of Perez, son of Judah, for it says AND THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF PEREZ.

Know that I have not found in the scripture a genealogy of Israel that is complete, for the scripture informs us until the time of the cessation of prophecy only of 2 families, and they are the family of the priests and the family of the kings, because they are honoured above all the families of Israel, and they are the two families which God has chosen. Aaron was chosen for the priesthood, as it is said 'the man whom I will choose',<sup>1</sup> and it says 'I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest'.<sup>2</sup> And David was chosen for kingship, for it is said 'And the Lord God of Israel chose me out of all the house of my father',<sup>3</sup> and it is written 'and he chose David his servant'.<sup>4</sup>

Know that his genealogy is recorded here from Perez until it reaches David and it ceases with him. In Chronicles<sup>5</sup> his genealogy is completed: you will find there were 38 generations of them recorded down to the time of the second temple. They are Asir, Shealtiel, Pedaiah, Zerubabel, Hananiah, Shecaniah, Shemiah, Neariah, Elioenai, and his sons; and from David to Jehoiachin there were 18 generations, and from Perez to David 10. The total is 38.

And if you count the years from Perez to Solomon you will find they are seven hundred years less 4, for Perez was at least 10 years

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1. Num. xvii 20.
  2. I Sam. ii 28.
  3. I Chr. xxviii 4.
  4. Ps. lxxviii 70.
  5. I Chr. iii 17-24.

old at the time that he begot Hezron, and he<sup>1</sup> was one of those who went down to Egypt. And they stayed in Egypt 210 years, and from (the Exodus from) Egypt until the temple was built<sup>2</sup> was 480 years. And if you count from Perez to Nahshon, which is 5 generations, you will find some 200-odd years.<sup>3</sup> And if you count from Nahshon to David it is 500 years and this shows that Salma begot Boaz towards the end of his days. And this was the case with Obed and with Jesse. And the latter generations of which there were 10, in the second temple, the prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi wrote them down, or Malachi alone wrote them down. And the text does not record for us how long these generations were, but it is likely that each generation was about 54 years.

18. AND THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF PEREZ. This may be connected with the matter of the records in the section Wayyigash,<sup>4</sup> or it may be connected with the business of Judah and Tamar at the end of which Perez is mentioned. And it begins here with the generations of Perez in accordance with what is established<sup>5</sup>

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1. i.e. Hezron. Gen. xlii 12.
  2. In the fourth year of Solomon's reign. I Kings vi 1.
  3. Since Nahshon was a brother-in-law of Aaron (Exod. xi 23) and took part in the Exodus (Num. i 7, ii 3 et al), the generations between Perez and Nahshon span a period approximately equivalent to that of the sojourn in Egypt.
  4. i.e. Gen. xlii 18 - xlvii 27. Perez is mentioned as a son of Judah in xlii 12.
  5. Heb. וַיִּגַּשׁ seems to be a corruption for וַיִּקַּח.

there. And although one passage is in the Torah and the other is in the five megilloth, all of them have been written by the divine word and the holy spirit, and all of them are the living words of God.

And it says GENERATIONS. Know that we have found the word 'generations' used in the scripture in three different ways:

1. It refers to the creation of the thing itself as in 'these are the generations of heaven and earth',<sup>1</sup> and it says 'before the mountains were born';<sup>2</sup> and 2. it is used for the description of things and stories and causes, as when it says 'these are the generations of Noah',<sup>3</sup> and 'these are the generations of Jacob';<sup>4</sup> and 3. it means 'genealogy' as in 'and these are the generations of Perez', and there are many other examples in the scripture.

QUESTION: Why does it begin with Perez here, and not with Judah?

ANSWER: To show by this the superiority of Perez over Zerah.

For if it had begun with him (i.e. Judah) because he is the root, it would not be known which of his sons was more honoured, and it is as I have recorded in the comment on 'May your house be'.

1. Gen. ii 4.
2. Ps. xc 2.
3. Gen. vi 9, where the phrase introduces the story of Noaz and his building of the ark. Although the names of his three sons are mentioned in v.10, the passage can hardly be considered a genealogy.
4. Gen. xxxvii 2, introducing the story of Joseph and his brothers which, again, can hardly be considered a genealogy. RSV translates, in this place, 'this is the history of the family of Jacob'.

And that these are mentioned in this matter is right, for all were honoured princes as I have explained in the case of Boaz, for he was a chief and honoured, for Judah was honoured and his seed after him was honoured continually as it is said 'For Judah became strong among his brothers'.<sup>1</sup>

When the time of David came, the strength of the kingship was revealed to them and the kingship did not pass from them until the sanctuary was destroyed. And afterwards Zerubabel was a prince in his time, and the seed of Zerubabel were (to be) princes in the time of the exile until the chosen one among them should be revealed for it is said 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah' etc.<sup>2</sup> And of him it says 'I will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar'.<sup>3</sup> It says '(a sprig) from the top' ( **מִצְמַרָּהּ** ), and it does not say 'the top' ( **צֶמְרָהּ** ) as in the verse 'came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar';<sup>4</sup> but it says '(a sprig) from the top' to teach that he would take Zerubabel and he would bring him from the exile to Jerusalem, and it says 'I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one',<sup>3</sup> which refers to his son the Messiah. He is the totality of its branches and he was chosen from them as it is said 'You love righteousness and hate wickedness'.<sup>5</sup> And of him Haggai the prophet,

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1. I Chr. v 2.

2. Gen. xlix 10.

3. Ezek. xvii 22.

4. *ibid* v.3.

5. Ps. xlv 8.

peace upon him, said 'On that day, says the Lord of hosts,  
 I will take you, O Zerubabel, son of Shealtiel' etc.,<sup>1</sup> and that  
 is the son of Zerubabel and he is called by his name as he is  
 called by the name of David, as it is written 'and David, my  
 servant, a prince for them for ever',<sup>2</sup> and as it is written  
 'And David my servant shall be a king to them'.<sup>3</sup> May he rise  
 up quickly in our time and in the days of all his people the  
 house of Israel. Amen and amen. Blessed be God, for ever,  
 amen and amen.

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1. Hag. ii 23.

2. Ezek. xxxvii 25.

3. Heb.: ודוד עבדי יהיה להם למלך. Markon identifies this  
 as a misquotation for ועבדי דוד מלך עליהם (Ezek. xxxvii 24).

## B. COMMENTARY OF RASHI.

i 1 AND IT CAME ABOUT IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES WERE

JUDGING: Before the accession of King Saul, when the generations were governed by judges. It was in the days of Ibzan, for our teachers said "Ibzan is Boaz".<sup>1</sup>

AND A MAN WENT: He was a rich nobleman and a governor of the generation<sup>2</sup> and he went abroad from the land of Israel because of his selfishness, for he was selfish with respect to the poor who came to importune him<sup>3</sup> and for this he was punished.

i 2 EPHRATHITES: 'Important men'. Thus (it says) 'son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite',<sup>4</sup> (meaning that he was) of noble descent.<sup>5</sup> Their importance is attested by the fact that Eglon, king of Moab, gave his daughter in marriage to Mahlon, for it is said that Ruth was the daughter of Eglon.<sup>6</sup> There is another way of understanding the word 'Ephrathites', for Bethlehem is called Ephrath.

1. Rashi is here quoting from the Talmud Baba Bathra 91a.

2. B.B. 91a.

3. לְדוֹחֵקוֹ in modern editions. The 3rd and 5th Rabbinic Bibles have לְדוֹחֵק - '(who came) in their poverty'.

4. I Sam. i 1.

5. אֲבוֹנִיּוֹס (i.e. εὐγενής). The same word, in the form אֲבוֹנִיּוֹסִי, is used in Ruth R. II 5 to explain אֲפֹרָחִים.

6. רֹחַ בָּחוּר שֶׁל עֲגִלוֹן Rashi is probably quoting either from Sot. 47a or from San. 105b, in both of which places an identical phrase occurs.



i 3 NAOMI'S HUSBAND: Why does it say this? It is to show that 'a man is not dead except to his wife'.<sup>1</sup> (And it says 'Naomi's husband' as though to say that because he was Naomi's husband and ruled over her, while she was subservient to him, punishment fell upon him but not upon her).<sup>2</sup>

i 5 THE TWO OF THEM ALSO: Why (does it say) 'also'? At first they suffered the loss of their wealth and their camels and their cattle died and afterwards they also died.

i 7 AND SHE WENT OUT FROM THE PLACE: Why is this said? It has already said AND SHE RETURNED FROM THE FIELD OF MOAB, and how could she return if she had not gone out from the place where she was? The text shows that the departure of a righteous man from any place is felt and leaves a mark - the splendour, the glory, the praise of the city go too, and this is also the significance of the verse 'And Jacob went out from Beersheba'.<sup>3</sup>

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1. This is a quotation from San. 22b.
  2. This section, which appears in the modern editions, is not found in the 3rd and 5th Rabbinic Bibles.
  3. A similar comment is found in Ruth R. II 12 and in Bereshith Rabbah LXVIII 6 (referring to Gen. xxviii 10 - 'And Jacob went out from Beersheba'). On the latter passage Rabbi Freedman (The Midrash, London 1939, I p.619 n.3) comments: 'The point is that it is unnecessary to state that he went out at all; obviously so, seeing that he went elsewhere! Hence there must have been something particularly noteworthy in the fact that it was Jacob who departed'.

i 12      FOR I AM TOO OLD TO BE (MARRIED) TO A MAN: "that I should be married to him and bear sons that you may be married to them, for (they would not be forbidden to you and)<sup>1</sup> you would not be forbidden to them as sisters-in-law since they would not have been born during their brothers' lifetime'.

There was no obligation (on Ruth and Orpah) to wait for a brother-in-law's decision, for Mahlon and Chilion had no valid Jewish marriage since they were foreign women. They had not been converted to Judaism and now they were coming to become proselytes as it says "FOR WITH YOU WE WILL RETURN TO YOUR PEOPLE" (which means) "from now on we shall be as one people".

IF I SAID THERE IS HOPE FOR ME: "Even if I thought that there was hope that I might be married again and bear sons".

AND EVEN IF I HAD A MAN TONIGHT: "And more than that, even if I conceived male children this night".

AND ALSO BORE SONS: "Or even if I had already borne sons".

i 13      WOULD YOU WAIT FOR THEM?: This is to be read as an interrogative sentence - "Do you mean to say you would wait for them UNTIL THEY ARE GROWN UP?". The expression 'would you wait' (תִּשְׁכַּרְנָה) is like 'his expectation (שְׂכָרָו) is in the Lord his God'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. This clause does not appear in the earlier editions.

2. Ps. cxlvi 5.

(WOULD) YOU SHUT YOURSELVES OFF?: The meaning is 'to tie' and the verb is the same as that in the sentence 'he drew a circle and stood in it'.<sup>1</sup> There are some who interpret the word as 'holding fast',<sup>2</sup> but it is not possible, for if this were the case it would be necessary to point the nun with daghesh or to write two nuns.

(FOR THE HAND OF THE LORD HAS GONE OUT AGAINST ME: R. Levi said, "In every place where it says 'the hand of the Lord' the meaning is 'pestilence', and the locus classicus is 'Behold the hand of the Lord is upon your cattle'" (Exodus 9).<sup>3</sup>

i 15 BEHOLD YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW HAS GONE BACK: The accent (in שבה ) is mil'el, under the shin, for it is in the past tense, and in a case where שבה has its accent milra', on the beth, it is in the present tense, and so it is in all similar cases.

i 16 DO NOT ENTREAT ME: Do not urge me.<sup>4</sup>

1. Rashi explains חעללה as from the root עול 'to draw a circle', rather than from עול . The quotation is probably taken from Taan. 19a (= Mishna III 8).
2. i.e. from the root עול . The reference may be to B.B. 73a, where R. Hiyya explained the word עול' , 'anchor', by reference to this verse.
3. Ex ix 3. The chapter, but not the verse, is given in the text of those editions which include this comment. The comment does not appear in the 3rd and 5th Rabbinic Bibles. It reads like a quotation from Ruth R. II 19, where the same statement appears.
4. He explains חפצ' as meaning חפצ' .

FOR WHERE YOU GO, I WILL GO: From this passage our teachers<sup>1</sup> deduce that if a man wishes to become a proselyte he must be informed of some of the penalties so that if he wishes to retract he may do so. For from the words of Ruth you are to learn that Naomi said to her "We are forbidden to go abroad beyond the limits on the Sabbath". She (Ruth) said to her, "WHERE YOU GO, I WILL GO". "It is forbidden that a female should be alone with a male who is not her husband". She said to her "WHERE YOU LODGE, I WILL LODGE". "Our people is differentiated from the rest of the peoples by six hundred and thirteen commandments". "YOUR PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE". "Idolatry is forbidden to us". "YOUR GOD SHALL BE MY GOD". "Four forms of capital punishment have been entrusted to the court". "BY WHATEVER MEANS<sup>2</sup> YOU DIE, I WILL DIE". "Two kinds of grave have been entrusted to the court, one for those who are stoned and burned, and one for those who are decapitated and strangled". She said to her "AND THERE WILL I BE BURIED".<sup>3</sup>

i 17      THUS MAY GOD DO TO ME: As he has begun, treating me badly, for his hand has gone out against me to kill my husband and to dispossess me of my property.      AND THUS MAY HE CONTINUE

- 
1. The reference may be to Yeb. 47a: **גר שבא להחגייר ... ומודיעין אותו מקצת מצות ... ומודיעין אותו עונשין של מצות.** If this identification is correct, Rashi is not here quoting verbatim.
  2. The context shows that **באשר** has been interpreted in this way.
  3. Rashi is probably here drawing principally on Yeb. 47b, but similar dialogues also appear in the Targum, Ruth Rabbah and Ruth Zuta. See above p.38f and below p.220ff.

TO DO: if you and I are separated by anything except death.<sup>1</sup>

i 18      AND SHE CEASED SPEAKING TO HER: On the basis of this they have said that (a proselyte) is not to be overburdened or cross-examined too closely.<sup>2</sup>

i 19      AND THE TWO OF THEM WENT: R. Abbahu said, "Come and see how precious are converts before the Holy One - Blessed be He. As soon as she determined to become a convert the scripture made her equal to Naomi".<sup>3</sup>

AND THE WHOLE CITY WAS STIRRED: The whole city was mourning<sup>4</sup> because they had assembled together to bury Boaz's wife, for she had died on that very day.<sup>5</sup>

IS THIS NAOMI?: The he is pointed with hateph because it is an interrogative. "IS THIS NAOMI, who was accustomed to go out in bolstered litters and on mules? You see what has happened to her because she left the land of Israel?"

I WENT OUT FULL: (That is) with riches and with sons.<sup>6</sup> (Another

1. Here Rashi turns MT around, reading **אם יפריד ביני ובינך** **כי המוה יפריד ביני ובינך** for **אם המוה**.

2. This is clearly a quotation from Yeb. 47b.

3. In Ruth R. III 5 this comment is attributed to R. Judah b. Simon.

4. Rashi derives **וההם** from the root **המה**, 'to moan, mourn'.

5. This tradition is found in B.B. 91a and in Ruth R. III 6, where it is given as one of three possible reasons why the town was crowded on that day.

6. Ruth R. III 7 reads 'with sons and daughters'.

interpretation is that she was pregnant).<sup>1</sup>

ענה ב' : He has testified against me that I have done evil before him. (Another interpretation is 'justice has testified against me', as in the verse 'The pride of Israel testified against him').<sup>2</sup>

i 22 AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BARLEY HARVEST: The text refers to the harvest of the Omer.<sup>3</sup>

ii 1 ACQUAINTANCE (מודע) : He was a relative, the son of Elimelech's brother. Our teachers have said, "Elimelech and Salmon, Boaz's father, and Ploni Almoni the redeemer, and Naomi's father were, all of them, sons of Nahshon, son of Aminadab. But the merit of their ancestors was of no avail to them when they left the land of Israel".<sup>4</sup>

ii 2 I WILL GO NOW TO THE FIELD: To one of the fields of the people of the city, after one of them in whose eyes I will find favour and who will not rebuke me.

- 
1. This phrase, which does not occur in the older Rabbinic Bibles, is to be found in Ruth R. III 7, where the first person is used instead of the third as here.
  2. Hos. v 5. This comment does not appear in the older Rabbinic Bibles.
  3. This seems to be a quotation from Ruth R. IV 2, where the view is attributed to R. Samuel b. Nahman that every occurrence of the words 'barley harvest' in scripture is a reference to the harvest of the Omer.
  4. A quotation from B.B. 91a, where this view is credited to R. Hanan b. Raba speaking in the name of Rab. See further below p.240 and p.248f.

AND I WILL GLEAN AMONG THE EARS, AFTER HIM IN WHOSE EYES I FIND FAVOUR: After whoever it is in whose eyes I find favour.<sup>1</sup>

ii 3 AND SHE WENT AND CAME AND GLEANED IN THE FIELD: We have found in a midrash<sup>2</sup> that Ruth returned before she went, for it says AND SHE CAME and afterwards (it says) AND SHE GLEANED, but (the explanation of the apparent inconsistency is that) she was marking the ways before she entered the field. AND SHE WENT AND CAME means that she returned to the city so as to make marks and signs so that she would not lose her way among the sheaves but would know the way to return.

AND HER CHANCE HAPPENED: that she came to THE PORTION OF THE FIELD which belonged TO BOAZ.

ii 5 WHOSE IS THIS YOUNG WOMAN?: Was it then Boaz's custom to ask about the women? (No,) but he saw in her signs of modesty and wisdom, in that she gathered two ears and she did not gather three ears,<sup>3</sup> and that she was gathering the standing ears in a standing position and the fallen ears in a seated position so that she did not stoop.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. The point of this paraphrase is probably to prevent the misinterpretation of 'after' in a temporal sense, i.e. 'after I have found favour in his eyes'.
  2. The 'difficulty' in reading the text literally is noted in Ruth R. IV 4, where R. Judah b. R. Simon explained "She began to mark out the ways". Another exegesis of the text is found in Shab. 113b: 'R. Eleazar said, "She repeatedly went and came until she found decent men whom to accompany"'.<sup>1</sup>
  3. This significance of this remark is that she did not take more than she was entitled to. According to Peah VI 5 'Two ears of corn may count as gleanings; three may not'.
  4. A similar explanation of Ruth's conduct which attracted Boaz's attention is to be found in Shab. 113b.

ii 6 WHO RETURNED WITH NAOMI: The accent (in שבה) is mil'el, under the shin, because it is the past tense and not the present tense.

ii 7 AND SHE SAID: in her heart.

LET ME GLEAN, I PRAY: the leget<sup>1</sup> of ears.

AND GATHER AMONG THE SHEAVES: the shikhah<sup>2</sup> of the sheaves.

ii 9 AND WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY, GO TO THE VESSELS: And if you are thirsty, do not be embarrassed<sup>3</sup> to go and drink from the vessels of water which the young men have drawn.

ii 13 I AM NOT AS ONE OF YOUR MAIDSERVANTS: I am not as important as one of your maidservants.

ii 14 AND DIP YOUR PIECE OF BREAD IN THE VINEGAR: From this we learn that vinegar is beneficial in very hot weather.<sup>4</sup>

AND HE PASSED (וַיַּצַּב) TO HER PARCHED GRAIN: He handed it to her. There is no other occurrence of this verb in the scripture but it occurs in the language of the Mishnah, in the phrase 'the back, the inside and the handle'.<sup>5</sup>

1. i.e. the poor man's or widow's portion.

2. i.e. 'the forgotten sheaves'.

3. אֵל הַכֶּלִּים. This expansion may be based on a play on the words אֵל הַכֶּלִּים.

4. In Shab. 113b this statement is attributed to R. Eleazar.

5. בֵּית הַצְבִּיטָה Hag. III 1.



ii 16      AND EVEN PULL OUT (של חסלו): Be sure to forget;  
 behave as if you are forgetting. The Aramaic for an inadvertant  
 act is שלוחא, and thus (we find the phrase) 'for the  
 carelessness'.<sup>1</sup> Another meaning is found in the phrase 'for your  
 olives shall drop off'.<sup>2</sup>

BUNDLES (צבחים): These are little sheaves. The same word  
 occurs in the Mishnah (in the phrase) 'if he finds them arranged  
 in packets or tied up in bundles'.<sup>3</sup>

ii 19      MAY HE WHO RECOGNIZED YOU BE BLESSED: 'He' means 'the  
 owner of the field who graciously gave you permission to glean  
 in his field'.

ii 20      (WITH THE LIVING AND THE DEAD: For he sustains and  
 provides for the living and he attended to the needs of the dead).<sup>4</sup>

iii 2      (מודעחנו : our relative).<sup>5</sup>

BEHOLD HE IS WINNOWING: the chaff. The verb 'to winnow' is  
 'vanner' in French.

1. על השל II Sam. vi 7.

2. ישל זיחיך Deut. xxviii 40.

3. Erub. X l.

4. This passage is not found in the older editions. The 'needs'  
 of the dead are the ritual washing of the body, closing the  
 eyes and mouth, the provision of shrouds and finally burial.

5. This comment appears in the modern but not the older editions.

TONIGHT: Theft and robbery were rife among that generation and he was sleeping in his granary to protect his granary.

iii 3 (AND WASH YOURSELF: from your idolatry.

AND ANOINT YOURSELF: This refers to commandments).<sup>1</sup>

AND PUT ON YOUR CLOAK: Sabbath garments.<sup>2</sup>

AND GO DOWN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR: The Kethibh is 'And I will go down', which means 'My merit will go down with you'.<sup>3</sup>

DO NOT BE KNOWN TO THE MAN: That is, to Boaz.

iii 6 AND SHE WENT DOWN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR AND DID:

She said to her, "WASH YOURSELF AND ANOINT YOURSELF AND PUT ON YOUR CLOAK AND afterwards GO DOWN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR". She did not do this, for she said, "If I go down all dressed up, anyone who meets me and sees me will think I am a harlot". Therefore she went down in the first place to the threshing-floor and afterwards adorned herself as her mother-in-law had instructed her.

iii 7 AND HIS HEART WAS MERRY: He was occupied in the Torah.

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1. These two comments, not included in the earlier editions of MG, are paralleled in Ruth R. V 12.

2. In MT שְׂמֹלֶת is pointed as a plural noun. The identification as 'Sabbath garments' is attributed in Shab. 113b to R. Eleazar. According to Ruth R. V 12, R. Hanina deduced from this verse that 'a man should have two sets of garments, one for weekdays and one for the Sabbath'.

3. So Ruth R. V 12.

AND SHE CAME SECRETLY: Quietly.

iii 8      AND THE MAN WAS STARTLED: He thought it was a demon and he wanted to cry out but she seized him and clasped him in her arms.

וִיִּלְפַח : 'He was seized'. The verb is the same as in the verse 'And Samson clasped'.<sup>1</sup>

AND BEHOLD A WOMAN: He put his hand on her head and recognized that it was a woman.

iii 9      SPREAD YOUR WING: ('Your wing' is) 'the corner of your garment'. ('Spread your wing' means) 'Cover me with your cloak'. It is a metaphor for taking in marriage.

FOR YOU ARE A REDEEMER: "You are qualified to redeem the estate of my husband as it is said 'And his redeemer who is related to him shall come and redeem ...' etc."<sup>2</sup> My mother-in-law and I need to sell our inheritance and now it is your duty to buy it. Buy me too, with it, so that the name of the dead man may be remembered through his estate, for when I come into the field people will say "This is Mahlon's wife".

iii 10      THAN THE FORMER: which you did for your mother-in-law.

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1. Ju. xvi 29.

2. Lev. xxv 25.

iii 12      AND NOW IT IS TRUE: **אָן** is written but not read.

The kethibh would suggest that doubt exists, but there is certainly a redeemer nearer than he. (Other texts read: **אָן יֵאָוֶה** indicates doubt, but it is certain).<sup>1</sup> R. Joshua b. Levi<sup>2</sup> said that Salmon and Elimelech and Tob were brothers, so why does it say 'to our brother Elimelech'? A man always calls his uncle 'brother' as is shown when it says 'And Abram heard that his brother had been captured',<sup>3</sup> but was not Abram his uncle? So Boaz was the nephew of Elimelech, the cousin of Mahlon, but Tob was more closely related.

NEARER THAN I: For he is a brother and I am the son of a brother.

(SPEND THE NIGHT, TONIGHT: Spend the night without a husband.)<sup>4</sup>

AS YAHWEH LIVES: She said to him "You are putting me off with (empty) promises". He jumped up and swore to her that he was not putting her off with (empty) promises. But some of our teachers<sup>5</sup> said that it was to his carnal appetite that he swore, for his carnal appetite was inciting him saying, "You are unmarried and she is unmarried, go to her". He swore that he would not go to

1. This comment is included in the modern editions only. *cf. Nach. 38a*
2. See above p. 136 n. 4. The point at issue here is that if 'Tob' is to be more closely related to Elimelech than is Boaz, then 'our brother' (iv 3) cannot be taken literally.
3. Gen. xiv 14.
4. This comment does not appear in the earlier editions. Ruth R. VI 4, where it is also found, continues 'but you will not spend another night without a husband'.
5. In Ruth R. VI 4 a similar exposition is attributed to R. Judah.

her except in marriage.

iii 14 AND HE SAID "LET IT NOT BE KNOWN": This refers to AND SHE AROSE BEFORE ONE COULD RECOGNIZE. He was quick to rise for he said to himself, "It will do me no good if it is known that the woman came to the threshing-floor".

iii 15 SIX BARLEY: It is impossible to say that it was six seahs of barley, for a woman cannot carry such a burden, but the text means literally 'six grains of barley', a portent that a son<sup>1</sup> would come forth from her who would be blessed with six blessings - the spirit of wisdom and discernment, counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.

iii 18 UNLESS the man WILL FINISH THE MATTER TODAY.

iv 1 SO AND SO: His name is not written because he was not willing to redeem. The phrase **פְּלִנִּי אֲלֵמֶנִי** is rendered in the Targum on the Prophets as 'hidden and secret'.<sup>2</sup> **פְּלִנִּי** means 'hidden and concealed' and it comes from the same root as the verb which occurs in the phrase 'If it is hidden'<sup>3</sup> and 'Is anything

1. In San. 93ab and Ruth R. VII 2 the significance of the six grains is said to be that from Ruth there would descend six men, each of whom would be blessed with six blessings. In San. the men are David, the Messiah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. In Ruth R. the last three are counted as one and Hezekiah and Josiah are added. Rashi's single descendant is clearly the Messiah, as is evidenced by the quotation of the Messianic attributes from Is. xi 2 which follows.
2. **כְּסִי וְסִמִּי** Targum I Sam. xxi 3, II Kings vi 8.
3. Deut. xvii 8 - **כִּי יִפְּלֵא**, which is rendered in the Targum **יִתְּכֵסִי**

hidden from the Lord?'<sup>1</sup>. **אלמוני** means 'a widower', 'one who is without a name'. (Other texts: He is called **אלמוני** because he was a widower (**אלמון**) in his knowledge of the Torah, for he should have expounded 'Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabiteess',<sup>2</sup> but he said "Lest I destroy my inheritance".)<sup>3</sup>

iv 4      AND I WILL KNOW, FOR THERE IS NO ONE EXCEPT YOU: Who is related, TO REDEEM.

iv 5      AND FROM RUTH THE MOABITESS: You must purchase it, and she will not be willing unless you marry her.

iv 6      LEST I DESTROY MY INHERITANCE: My seed, as in the verse 'the inheritance of the Lord is sons'.<sup>4</sup> 'Lest I give discredit to my seed, for it is said 'An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not come ...''.<sup>5</sup> But he was mistaken on account of 'Ammonite but not Ammonitess'.

1. Gen. xviii 14 **היפלא מיהרה**; Targum **היחכסא מן קדם יי**. Rashi thus attempts to relate **פלני** to the root **פלא** which he understands to mean 'to be hidden'.
2. The reference is to the supposed limitation in application of the law of Deut. xxiii 4 - 'No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of Yahweh' - to include only the men of these nations. See below p.218.
3. This section does not appear in the earlier editions.
4. Ps. cxxvii 3.
5. Deut. xxiii 4.

iv 7      CONCERNING REDEMPTION: This is selling.<sup>1</sup>

EXCHANGE: This is changing.<sup>2</sup>

A MAN DREW OFF HIS SHOE: This is for ratification, as when we ratify with a scarf instead of a shoe. Our teachers are divided on the question 'Who gave the shoe to whom?' Some say the bargain is sealed by the handing over of the property of the purchaser and Boaz gave (his shoe) to the redeemer, but others say that the bargain is sealed by the handing over of the property of the seller and the redeemer gave (his shoe) to Boaz.<sup>3</sup>

AND THIS WAS TESTIMONY IN ISRAEL: The manner of attestation.

iv 10      TO RAISE UP THE NAME OF THE DEAD OVER HIS INHERITANCE: Because his wife goes out of and comes into the estate, and brings things in and takes things out, people say 'This was Mahlon's wife'; his name is remembered over it.

iv 11      LIKE RACHEL AND LIKE LEAH: Although they were of the tribe of Judah and from the sons of Leah, they acknowledge that Rachel was the chief one<sup>4</sup> of the house and place Rachel before Leah.

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1. Rashi here quotes from B.M. 47a where Lev. xxvii 33 is cited as the authority for this interpretation.

2. This, too, is a quotation from B.M. 47a.

3. The dispute is recorded in B.M. 47a. In reference to this particular case, R. Judah thought the redeemer gave the shoe to Boaz; the majority apparently favoured the opposite point of view.

4. עֵיקָרָה . This represents a midrashic reading of Gen. xxix 31 - וְרַחֵל עָקְרָה 'And Rachel was barren'. Ruth R. VII 13.  
 י"ז -

AND CALL A NAME: That is to say, May your name be great.

LIKE THE HOUSE OF PEREZ: From whom we are descended.

iv 18      THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF PEREZ: Because he has traced the descent of David to the name of Ruth the Moabiteess he goes back and traces it to the name of Judah.



## C. COMMENTARY OF AN ANONYMOUS RABBI.

## Chaper I.

שפוט (judging) is the infinitive.

AND IT CAME ABOUT IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING:

This thing happened before there was a king reigning over the Israelites, when they were judged by shepherd-judges.

AND IT CAME ABOUT IN THE DAYS ..... AND THERE WAS A FAMINE:

Many passages are frequently introduced by a twofold use of הִיָּה, as in the case of 'and it shall be (וְהָיָה) that the waters which you shall take from the Nile shall be (וְהָיָה) as blood on the dry land'.<sup>1</sup> - R. Samuel.<sup>2</sup>

AND IT CAME ABOUT IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING:

The text sets out to teach you how the affair of Elimelech developed, for he was one of the leaders of Judah and he could have found wives for his sons among the greatest (families) of the tribe of Judah. Why, then, should they have married Moabite women? Because of Ruth's conversion to the Name of Heaven, for which her reward was that kingship should come from her. - R. Joseph.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ex. iv 9.

2. Samuel ben Meir, known as Rashbam; a grandson and pupil of Rashi, he was born about 1085 and died about 1174.

3. Joseph ben Simeon Qara, born between 1060 and 1070 and died between 1130 and 1140. He was a nephew and pupil of Menahem ben Helbo and a friend and perhaps also a pupil of Rashi.

AND A MAN WENT: He was a rich nobleman and a governor of the generation and he went away because of his selfishness, for he was selfish towards the poor who came to importune him and for this he was punished. - R. Solomon.<sup>1</sup>

But this is not sensible, for it was not out of selfishness that he emigrated but because of the famine, for it says "she returned from the field of Moab when she heard in the field of Moab that God<sup>2</sup> had visited his people to give them bread". Hence we see that it was on account of the famine that he emigrated.

IN THE FIELD OF MOAB: 'Fields' is 'champons' in French.

EPHRATHITES: They are so called from the name of their home; Bethlehem and Ephrath are the same place, as it is said 'She was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem'.<sup>3</sup>

NAOMI'S MAN (אִישׁ): Naomi's husband (בַּעַל). - R. Samuel.

AND ELIMELECH DIED: (This is said) to teach you that if he had remained alive he would not have allowed his sons to marry foreign women. - R. Joseph.

1. Solomon ben Isaac, commonly known as Rashi (1040-1105). The comment attributed to him here differs slightly from that in MG in that, where the latter reads וַיֵּצֵא מֵאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֹצֵה לְאֶרֶץ, this text has simply וַיֵּצֵא.
2. Throughout this commentary, both in biblical quotations and, at times, in the comments, the divine name is represented thus: 'ד' - the numeral 4, signifying 'tetragrammaton'. I have translated this everywhere by 'God'.
3. Gen. xxxv 19. MT has אֶפְרָתָה instead of אֶפְרָת as cited here; אֶפְרָת occurs only in Gen. xlviii 7, where the verb is וְאֶקְבְּרָה. According to BH3, however, 8 MSS and the Targum have אֶפְרָת in the former place.

THE TWO OF THEM ALSO: Elimelech was already dead and afterwards his two sons also died after him. - R. Samuel.

THE TWO OF THEM ALSO: At first they suffered the loss of their wealth and their camels and their cattle died, and afterwards they died.<sup>1</sup> - R. Solomon.

FOR SHE HAD HEARD: Already that the people of her town had been visited and there was food in the land.

TO RETURN: In order to return. - R. Samuel.

SHE WENT OUT FROM THE PLACE: Why is this said? It has said '(she returned) from the field of Moab': how could she return if she did not go out from the place where she was? The text shows that the departure of a righteous man from a place leaves a mark - the splendour and the praise of the city goes too.<sup>2</sup>

- R. Solomon.

MAY GOD SHOW YOU AS MUCH KINDNESS AS YOU HAVE SHOWN TO THE DEAD

AND TO ME: For, although her sons were dead, they had left their homeland and gone with her. - R. Joseph.

GOD GRANT YOU THAT YOU MAY FIND REST, EACH IN THE HOUSE OF HER

HUSBAND: It is as if she said "It would be better for you that

1. The comment here ends with **מחר הם**, but that in MG reads **מחר גם הם**.

2. Rashi's comment in MG is slightly longer than it is here. 'She returned from the field of Moab' is written in full there: here it is contracted to **משמ**. 'The departure ....' "is felt" before it "leaves a mark", and "the glory" of the city falls between 'the splendour' and 'the praise'.

you were to be married in your homeland and find rest, each in the house of her husband, than that the two of you<sup>1</sup> should be going about with me in a foreign country".

AND SHE KISSED THEM: This is the kiss of parting in accordance with the custom of the world, for anyone who is parting from a friend kisses him and goes.

AND THEY SAID TO HER "BUT WITH YOU WE WILL RETURN TO YOUR PEOPLE":

She says to them "God grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband", and they reply to her "We will return with you to your people", as though saying "We shall not be married now, except to your people", and she answers them "GO BACK, MY DAUGHTERS. WHY WOULD YOU GO WITH ME? If it is to marry men of my people that you are returning with me, there is no man in Israel who will leave the daughters of Israel and marry you, and in case you should think that I am about to marry again for your sake and have sons who will be husbands to you ....."; therefore it says "Have I yet sons in my womb who will be husbands to you?"

GO BACK, MY DAUGHTERS, GO, FOR I AM TOO OLD TO HAVE A HUSBAND.

IF I SAID I HAD HOPE: This means 'Even if I were in the days of my youth when I could have said "There is hope that I may bear sons", or even if I were with a man tonight and also bore sons, WOULD YOU WAIT ( חֲשַׁבְנָה ) FOR THEM - the meaning of this word is 'hope' as in אֲלִיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ<sup>2</sup> - UNTIL THEY WERE GROWN: would you keep yourselves for them?

1. The Hebrew text has 'the two of them'.

2. Ps. cxlv 15.

WOULD YOU SHUT YOURSELVES OFF ( **העגינה** ): <sup>1</sup> Would you remain as **עגונוה** <sup>2</sup> for their sakes? It is a rhetorical question.

R. Samuel and R. Joseph both said **העגינה** means **עיגון** (anchor) and it is from the root **ענה**, as **העשינה** comes from **עשה**, and **הבנינה** from **בנה**, but R. Solomon says **העגינה** means 'to tie' and the verb is the same as in the sentence 'he drew a circle and stood in it', <sup>3</sup> and it is not possible to explain the word from **עיגון**, for if this were the case it would be necessary to point the nun with daghesh or to write two nuns.

NO, MY DAUGHTERS, FOR IT IS VERY BITTER FOR ME **מכא** : 'It is very bitter for me, more than for you, for it is possible for you to be married to (new) husbands but since my husband and my sons are dead it is not possible for them to return again and I am too old, also, to be married (again) and so I will separate from you and go away'. <sup>he separates</sup>

FOR THE HAND OF GOD HAS GONE OUT AGAINST ME: The significance of this is 'it has gone out against me and not against you'. 'Hand' means 'a blow' as in 'Behold, the hand of the Lord ....'. <sup>4</sup>

AND THEY RAISED THEIR VOICES AND WEPT AGAIN: (This is) the weeping of separation.

AND ORPAH KISSED HER MOTHER-IN-LAW: In order to part from her and to go back to her home, but Ruth clung to her.

1. MT has **העגנה**, without the yod.
2. Women who have been deserted by their husbands.
3. Taan. III 8 (19a). <sup>70</sup> Rashi's suggestion is that **העגנה** is to be derived from the root **עוג**.
4. Ex. ix 3.

AND SHE SAID "BEHOLD, YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW HAS GONE BACK TO HER PEOPLE AND TO HER GODS. GO BACK AFTER YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW to your people and to your gods. - R. Joseph.

The accent in שבה is on shin, so it is the past tense, but in a case where שבה has the accent on the beth it is the present tense. This is a general rule; the distinction between the past and the present tenses is always made clear by the accent.

DO NOT ENTREAT ME: This is like 'Do not entreat me'.<sup>1</sup> - R. Samuel.

FOR WHERE YOU GO, I WILL GO: Because it said above 'they went on the way to return to the land of Judah', she says 'where you go, I will go'.

AND WHERE YOU LODGE, I WILL LODGE: "It would be better to lodge with you as a traveller camping for the night, rather than to settle down in my home among noble princes".

YOUR PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE AND YOUR GOD MY GOD: Because she (Naomi) said above "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods" etc., she replies "Your people shall be my people and your god my god".

WHERE YOU DIE, I SHALL DIE, AND THERE I SHALL BE BURIED: This means 'Until the day of death I will not part from you', as the text explains at the end - '(only) death shall separate me from

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1. There is little point in this comment as it stands and something would appear to have gone wrong with it. Perhaps it should read 'Do not urge me', as in Rashi's commentary, where חפצרי is explained by חפצעי.

you' - but until then they would not be separated, in their lifetime, one from another.

AND THERE I SHALL BE BURIED: This means 'When I am dead I will be buried, for they will bury me beside you because of the love which was between us in our lifetime'. And, according to our ways, from examination of the expression (which she used) when she said "Your sister-in-law had gone back to her people and her gods", you learn that they had been converted to Judaism when they were married to Mahlon and Chilion, for the expression 'has gone back' can only mean that the woman who had been converted has now gone back to her former state, to her people and her gods. - R. Joseph.

"THUS MAY GOD DO TO ME": - (She said this) as a man swears to his companion with the expression 'and thus may he add to me goodness' - "if any thing but death shall separate me from you".

- R. Samuel.

FOR WHERE YOU GO, I WILL GO: From this they<sup>1</sup> have said "If a man wishes to become a proselyte he is to be informed of some of the penalties so that if he wishes to retract he may do so. For from the words of Ruth you are to learn what Naomi said to her: "We are forbidden to go abroad beyond the limits on the Sabbath". She said to her "Where you go I will go". "It is forbidden to

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1. This paragraph, like the following one, is a quotation from Rashi. In MG the verb **אמר** has the subject **רבותנו** - 'our teachers'.

us that a female should be alone with a male when she is not his wife".<sup>1</sup> She said "Where you lodge I will lodge". "We are distinguished<sup>2</sup> by six hundred and thirteen commandments". She said to her<sup>3</sup> "Your people is my people". Idolatry is forbidden to us". She said to her<sup>3</sup> "Your god is my god". "Four forms of capital punishment have been entrusted to the court". She said to her<sup>3</sup> "By whatever means<sup>4</sup> you die I will die". "And two kinds of grave have been ordained by the court, one for those who have been stoned and burned and one for those who have been decapitated and strangled". She said to her "There I will be buried".

THUS MAY GOD DO TO ME: As he has begun to treat me badly, for his hand has gone out against me to kill my husband and to dispossess me of my property. If you and I are separated except by death. And she ceased to speak to her: from this they have said that (a proselyte) is not to be overburdened or cross-examined too closely. - R. Solomon.

SHE SAW THAT SHE WAS DETERMINED TO GO WITH HER: Ruth's words which she said - "Do not entreat me to leave you and to turn back from following you" etc. - contrast strongly with Naomi's words which she said - "Go back after your sister-in-law".

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1. MG has 'who is not her husband'.
  2. MG adds 'from the rest of the peoples'.
  3. 'She said to her' does not appear at this point in MG.
  4. This construction has clearly, to judge from the context, been put on באשר.



SHE CEASED SPEAKING TO HER: As soon as she saw that she was determined to go with her she ceased saying to her "Go back", and she accepted that she should go with her as is explained by 'the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem'.

AND WHEN THEY CAME TO BETHLEHEM THE WHOLE TOWN WAS AGITATED ABOUT THEM AND THEY SAID "IS THIS NAOMI?" This teaches that her appearance was changed because of the hard times which had befallen her and they were surprised and said "Is this Naomi?"

AND SHE SAID TO THEM "CALL ME MARAH": "A woman who spends her days among goodness and her years in pleasantness may fittingly be called Naomi, but do not call me Naomi. The pleasant days are past, call me Marah, which means 'Bitter soul'". - R. Joseph.

וְחַהוּם is like וְחַנְהוּם and it is not possible to explain it as נַחֲמָה for if it were so it would be necessary to point the he with pathah. וְחַהוּם is like וְחַשֵּׁם, וְחַקֵּץ, וְחַלֵּךְ, וְיִלֵּךְ.

הַמֶּר is hiphil like הִרַע and הִפֵּר. - R. Samuel.

HE HAS BROUGHT ME BACK EMPTY: רִיקָם is a noun. In French it is marmiteux.<sup>1</sup> Likewise in <sup>2</sup> לֹא יֵרָאוּ פְנֵי רִיקָם it is a noun.

עֵנָה בִּי means 'testified against me'; 'my sins have testified

1. Marmiteux (poor) is the word most nearly like מַרְמִטוֹן which fits the context. There may have been some corruption in the text of the commentary, but in the twelfth century "marmiteux" meant 'sad, afflicted', which fits even better than the modern 'poor'.
2. Ex. xxiii 15, xxxiv 20.

against me'. In that he has brought me back empty it is as if he had testified against me that my sins have brought about these things and my iniquities have kept good away from me.

It may be learnt from this that wherever ענה is followed by ב the meaning is 'testify' as in <sup>1</sup>הנני ענו בי, <sup>2</sup>וענה בי צדקה, <sup>3</sup>לא תענה בריעך and <sup>4</sup>ואעידה בס. And if there is no ב it is 'answer' as in <sup>5</sup>וכפ'ס מעץ יענה, and I have found this in Dunash's book.

AND NAOMI RETURNED AND RUTH THE MOABITE, HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, WAS WITH HER: Has it not already been said above 'And the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem'? Why then was it necessary for it to say again 'And Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabite ...'? The answer is that at the time when Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, with her, it happened that they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley-harvest. This principle may be observed in all 24 books; in any place where you find that the one thing is mentioned twice the first occurrence records the event and the second explains the relation of the event to that which took place afterwards. Thus we find at the end of

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1. I Sam. xii 3.
  2. Gen. xxx 33. This is the only place in which ב is used in the sense 'in favour of' rather than 'against'.
  3. Ex. xx 16 and Deut. v 17.
  4. Deut. xxxi 28. Either we must assume that the writer suffered a lapse of concentration as a result of which he wandered into a different verb or this quotation is included in order to show, by giving an example of its use with the root עור, that ב can indeed mean 'against'. The latter possibility is perhaps the more probable of the two, but there is nothing in the context to bring out this point.
  5. Two philologists named Dunash lived in the tenth century: Dunash ibn Tamim, who wrote a history of Hebrew philology, and his younger contemporary Dunash ben Labrat, who was a pupil of Saadya and a critic of Menahem ben Saruq.

the book of Judges 'he gave back the silver to his mother',<sup>1</sup>  
 and this is written after it was said '(he gave back the) eleven  
 hundred pieces of silver to his mother'.<sup>2</sup> Thus the second text  
 explains that he gave back the eleven hundred pieces of silver  
 to his mother at the same time that 'his mother took two hundred  
 pieces of silver and gave it to the silver-smith'.<sup>1</sup> In this case  
 too, because it is necessary to say how it came about that Ruth  
 chanced to go to the piece of land that belonged to Boaz, the  
 repetition was necessitated in order that it might be said that  
 it was the beginning of the barley-harvest when they returned to  
 Bethlehem.

## Chapter II.

וְיָמָן : This means a 'kinsman' of her husband, as in 'Call wisdom  
 וְיָמָן.<sup>3</sup>

AFTER HIM IN WHOSE EYES I FIND FAVOUR: Thus said Ruth to her  
 mother-in-law, "When anyone goes out to glean among the ears, each  
 one directs his attention to the fields of his relatives, each man  
 going after his friend. I have no friend but I will go by myself  
 after a man in whose eyes I find favour and who will allow me to  
 glean in his field.

AND HER CHANCE HAPPENED: Thus the event happened that she chanced  
 to come to the piece of land which belonged to Boaz. - R. Joseph.

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1. Ju. xvii 4.
  2. ibid. 3.
  3. Prov. vii 4.

AND HE SAID TO THE REAPERS "GOD BE WITH YOU": From this our teachers have taught us good manners, but this is not the simple meaning.

WHO WAS APPOINTED OVER THE REAPERS: He was standing over them to urge them on in their work. - R. Samuel.

BOAZ SAID TO THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS APPOINTED OVER THE REAPERS "WHO IS THIS YOUNG WOMAN?" It is a general custom for any man who is harvesting his vineyard or reaping his field to appoint an official who will not allow strangers to gather in his field at harvest time unless they are gathering near to him and when Boaz came he did not ask about the other young women, for he knew them, and he did not reproach his man who was appointed over the reapers for having allowed these young women to glean; but with respect to Ruth, who appeared in his eyes to be a foreigner, he insisted on asking about her "Who is this young woman" as if rebuking him for having allowed her to glean.

AND THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS APPOINTED OVER THE REAPERS ANSWERED "SHE IS A YOUNG MOABITE WOMAN, THE ONE WHO CAME BACK WITH NAOMI FROM THE COUNTRY OF MOAB", as if replying that it was because of her kinship that she had come there.

AND SHE SAID "LET ME GLEAN, I PRAY, AND GATHER AMONG THE SHEAVES AFTER THE REAPERS": It is still the young man, the reapers' overseer, who is speaking, telling Boaz that when she arrived in the field to glean she said to him "Let me glean, I pray, and gather among the sheaves after the reapers".

AND SHE CAME etc. ... **זו שבחה הבית מעט** : It is as if he

replied to him "There is no need for you to be angry about this, even if she is a foreigner, for she has been standing from early morning until now and she has gleaned only this little bit for the needs of her mother-in-law who is remaining in the house and waiting for her. R. Menahem bar Helbo<sup>1</sup> explained

זה מעט לשבח הבית as זה שבתה הבית מעט - 'this is a little for her who remains in the house'.

AND BOAZ SAID TO RUTH "DO YOU NOT HEAR, MY DAUGHTER, DO NOT GO TO GLEAN IN ANOTHER FIELD": After he said to her "Do not go to glean in another field", what need was there for him to say "and do not go away from here?" (The text says this because) he said to her "Do not go to glean in another field so that you will not be molested in another field, for it is a disgraceful and abhorrent thing for a woman to be molested by young men". In case she should think "Even here Boaz's men may molest me", it is said "Thus you shall stay close to my young woman and I have commanded my young men not to touch you", and so her mother-in-law said to her "It is well, my daughter, that you go out with his young women so you will not be molested in another field". And in case she should think "When they have reaped (this field) I will, of necessity, have to go to another field", it is said "LET YOUR EYES BE ON THE FIELD WHERE THEY ARE REAPING AND GO AFTER THEM"

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1. Menahem ben Helbo was the uncle and teacher of Joseph Qara, who cites him in his commentaries, "these quotations being almost the only source of knowledge concerning Menahem's exegesis" (JE vii p.437).

as though to say "Let your eyes and your heart be behind my reapers, to glean behind them in whatever field they are reaping". And thus Ruth also related to her mother-in-law "He also said to me "With the young men who are mine you shall remain until they have finished all my harvest"."

WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY: If you are thirsty for water. It is customary for people to be thirsty at harvest time on account of the heat of the weather.

GO TO THE VESSELS AND DRINK FROM WHAT THE YOUNG MEN HAVE DRAWN, although the rest of the needy people who go out to glean behind the reapers are not entitled to go to the vessels to drink from what the young men have drawn.

SHE BOWED DOWN TO THE GROUND: to give him thanks.

WHY HAVE I FOUND FAVOUR IN YOUR EYES, THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE NOTICE OF ME, WHEN I AM A FOREIGNER? Why have you seen fit to take notice of me?

BOAZ ANSWERED AND SAID TO HER "IT HAS CERTAINLY BEEN TOLD TO ME": Why is **הגד** written twice?<sup>1</sup> (To indicate that) "it has been told ( **הוגד** ) to me that you have left your father and mother, and it has been told ( **הוגד** ) to me that you have left your native land and gone to a people whom you did not know formerly. For if you did not have a father and mother when you departed from there I

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1. This refers to the construction **הגד הגד**.

would have attributed your emigration to a desire for pleasure, or if you had departed from another place which was not your place of origin and birth and which was not familiar to you I would have attributed your emigration to a desire to marry a husband; but as it is the matter may not be attributed to a need of maintenance for your father and mother are alive, nor can it be suggested that it was in order to marry a husband that you left there, for (in such a case) you would surely have stayed among your own people. You have left your native land and come to a people that you do not know and it is hard for any man to marry a woman if he is not well acquainted with her, and so it can only be supposed that you have come TO SHELTER UNDER HIS WINGS". The word for 'shelter' ( **קִיץ** ) is 'abriement' in French.

MAY GOD REPAY YOU IN FULL FOR YOUR DEEDS AND MAY YOUR REWARD BE COMPLETE: Because the woman who has left her father's house and the house of her birth and gone abroad to a people whom she does not know is in need of maintenance and of a man worthy of her, therefore he blesses her (saying) "May God repay you in full for your deeds and may your reward be complete". This means "May the Holy One - Blessed be he - grant in full to you all that you come in need of as a result of your having gone abroad to shelter under his wings; may he give you good provisions and a resting-place that it may be well with you".

AND I AM NOT ....: I am not worthy to be even as one of your maidservants.

DIP YOUR PIECE (OF BREAD) IN THE VINEGAR: From this (we learn) that vinegar is good in burning heat.

AND HE PASSED ( ויצבט ) TO HER PARCHED CORN: This means 'he held out ( הושיט ) to her', as we learn from the phrase (in the Mishnah) 'the back and the inside and the handle ( ביה הצביטה )'<sup>1</sup> which is explained in the Gemara as 'the place by which it is handled'.

SHE ATE AND WAS SATISFIED AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER: Because it says shortly 'She brought out and gave to her what had been left when she was satisfied' it is anticipated here and teaches you that she had (some food) left over.

וְחוֹתֵר - 'She had (something) left'. It is pointed thus וְחוֹתֵר, because it is hiphil and the taw is pointed with pathah because of the Soph Pasuc. The hiphil is always like הִיפֵּר and הִיחֹזֵר.

EVEN BETWEEN THE SHEAVES LET HER GLEAN: The rest of the gleaners were not allowed to glean between the sheaves in case they should dislodge the ears from the sheaves but she is to glean among the sheaves.

וְלֹא חֲלִימוֹה : This means 'Do not turn her away empty-handed'; "ne l'escondites" in French. Just as when your young men were with us we did not withhold from them ( וְלֹא חֲלִימוֹה ), which means 'we did not withhold from them nor refuse them anything

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1. Hag. III 1.



that they asked from us'. So it is in the case of ואין מכלים

<sup>1</sup>דבר בארץ, which means 'no man withheld anything from his neighbour', or 'est-il autre escondit'<sup>2</sup> in French, because all of them were well-off and none of them was needy as it is explained 'a place where there was no lack of anything in the land'.<sup>3</sup>

AND EVEN PULL OUT (SOME GRAIN) FROM THE BUNDLES: שול חשולו

(PULL OUT) means 'throw aside' (השלך חשליכו) for her.

The handfuls which a man grasps while harvesting are called 'bundles' (צבחים) and so, in the language of the Mishnah, we find the phrase שול חשולו<sup>4</sup> צבחים או כרוכוח is from the root שולל as סך חסוכו (is from the root סכך)

- R. Samuel.

שול חשולו is equivalent to שכח השכחו; 'Behave as if you are forgetting'.<sup>5</sup>

WHERE DID YOU GLEAN TODAY, AND WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING?

The word עשה means 'to work for gain or profit', as in '(my hand)

1. Ju. xviii 7.

2. אשטל אלטר שקונישר : There appears to be some confusion in the text here for it would seem we want the same verb that is used above. 'Escondire' should, properly, be conjugated with avoir, not être.

3. Ju. xviii 10.

4. Erub. X 1.

5. This comment is identical to the first part of Rashi's comment (which is longer), although he is not acknowledged here as its author.

has made ( עשה ) me all this wealth',<sup>1</sup> where עשה can be interpreted to mean 'it has acquired (for me)', and so it is with 'during the seven years of plenty the earth produced ( ובעש ) abundance',<sup>2</sup> which means 'it made a profit', and likewise 'it will bring forth ( ובעש ) fruit for three years'.<sup>3</sup> 'Where have you worked' is 'où as tu guadagné'<sup>4</sup> in French.

MAY HE BE BLESSED WHO TOOK NOTICE OF YOU: The word מכיר is the same as in איש מאת מכרו - 'each from his acquaintance'.<sup>5</sup>

Why did Naomi choose to ask her "Where did you glean today?", and why did she choose to say "May he who took notice of you be blessed?" On seeing that she had brought an ephah of barley in one day, which no man who goes out to glean after the reapers would be able to glean in ten days, she said "This is no 'leget' unless you have been gleaning with one of our relatives today, since you have brought all this". She said to her "Where did you glean today,<sup>6</sup> for it is impossible for you to bring back all this unless you have been gleaning with one of our relatives".

1. Deut. viii 17.

2. Gen. xli 47.

3. Lev. xxv 21.

4. או אשית וודינר; this verb is thus identified by Jellinek and appears to represent a transitional stage between the Germanic waidanjan and the French goaignier, guoaignier (mod. 'gagner'). The "g" is not represented in our Hebrew spelling so it would appear still to have been pronounced with the Germanic "w" sound. I have presumed that אשית should be אשטי = as tu.

5. II Kings xii 6.

6. It would seem likely that the commentator has based his interpretation of this passage on a reading איפה לקטח for MT איפה לקטח, and perhaps his comment should be translated, accordingly: "It's an ephah you've gathered! But it is impossible .." etc.

Therefore she said "May he be blessed who took notice of you".

AND HE ALSO SAID TO ME: He did only good to me today.

UNTIL THEY HAVE FINISHED: **עַד אֲשֶׁר** is the same as **עַד אֵם**

and thus **עַד אֲשֶׁר רָחַץ**<sup>1</sup> means 'until you wash' (**עַד אֲשֶׁר רָחַץ**).

### Chapter III.

**מִדְּעַתְנָו :** **מִדְּעַתְנָו** is a noun like **מִדְּעַתְנָו**.

MY DAUGHTER, SHALL I NOT SEEK FOR YOU A REST SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU? Any man to whom a woman is married is called 'a rest', as it says above 'and may you find rest, each in the house of her husband', but at times when a woman is married to a man who treats her with contempt there is not complete rest, and so Naomi said "I will seek a rest which will be good for you, and that will be with Boaz, our relative, with whose young women you have been, for he is a righteous man and he will not treat you with contempt".

BEHOLD HE IS WINNOWER BARLEY AT THE THRESHING-FLOOR TONIGHT:

It is not proper for a woman to seek a man at his house in front of his household because of suspicion, but tonight he is winnowing barley at the threshing-floor, so go quietly and gently and uncover his feet and lie down.

AND HE WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHALL DO: (He will tell you) whether he will marry you himself or marry you to another man.

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1. Lev. xxii 6.

חַעֲשִׂין (YOU SHALL DO): As the plural is חַעֲשׂוּ or חַעֲשׂוֹן,  
so is the feminine חַעֲשִׂי or חַעֲשִׂין.

וַחֲגַל (AND SHE UNCOVERED) is the same as וַחֲגִלָּה, as וַחֲכַל  
is the same as וַחֲכִלָּה.

AND IT HAPPENED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT THAT THE MAN WAS  
STARTLED AND TURNED AND BEHOLD, A WOMAN WAS LYING AT HIS FEET:  
The text <sup>אֲחֵת</sup> and its meaning are distorted, from the end to the  
beginning, and this is <sup>הַ</sup>its meaning: when he was aroused from his  
sleep and he stretched his arms and legs and realized that the  
woman was lying by his feet he was startled as a result of this.  
The word וַיִּלְפַּח refers to the stretching of his arms and legs  
and it means 'twisting' (עִיכוּם). It is customary for a man  
who is awakened from sleep to stretch out his arms and legs and  
to twist about and thus it says 'Samson twisted about',<sup>1</sup> which is  
'estorst' in French. Here, too, וַיִּלְפַּח is 'estorst' in French.

SPREAD YOUR WING OVER YOUR MAIDSERVANT, FOR YOU ARE A REDEEMER:

It is as if she said "It's not for fornication that I have come  
here but to be married to you, for you are a redeemer". What is  
implicit here is explained towards the end of the book, where it  
says 'On the day you buy the field from Naomi's hand (and) from'<sup>2</sup>

1. וַיִּלְפַּח שִׁמְשׁוֹן - Ju. xvi 29. I have translated the  
quotation in accordance with the commentator's understanding  
of the meaning of the verb.
2. In the absence of any clear indication of how the corruption  
וַיִּלְפַּח of MT was understood by the commentator, I translate  
literally. In the text as it is quoted here the ו is  
missing and it might appear that 'Ruth' was considered the  
direct object of וַיִּלְפַּח.

Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the dead, you buy to raise up the name of the dead over his inheritance'. SPREAD YOUR WING: This expression refers to marriage as in 'I spread my wing over you and covered your nakedness'.<sup>1</sup>

YOU HAVE MADE YOUR LATTER KINDNESS BETTER THAN YOUR FORMER ONE, IN THAT YOU HAVE NOT GONE AFTER YOUNG MEN, WHETHER POOR OR RICH: "Had you not come to me I could have attributed the reason for your conversion to the fact that today or tomorrow you might desire one of the young men and be married to him, for a woman prefers a poor young man to a rich old man. But now the matter is decided, for you have (clearly) become a proselyte only for Heaven's sake".

FOR ALL THE GATE OF MY PEOPLE KNOWS THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN OF WORTH: The significance of this is: "When a man marries a woman from a (particular) family he may be shamed and disgraced by her because of her family. However I, if I marry you, will not be disgraced by you; I will be honoured and ennobled<sup>2</sup> by you, for all the gate of my people knows that you are a woman of worth and a woman of worth is a crown to her husband".<sup>3</sup> - R. Joseph.

יָוֹחֵר מִמֶּנִּי (THAN I): That is to say 'more than I' ( יוֹחֵר מִמֶּנִּי ).

- R. Samuel.

1. Ezek. xvi 8.

2. The verb here is **מַחְעֵסֵר**, which explains the relevance of the statement that **אִשָּׁה חֵיִל** is **עֹסֶרָה** to her husband.

3. Prov. xii 4.

STAY HERE TONIGHT AND, IN THE MORNING, IF HE WILL REDEEM YOU, WELL, LET HIM REDEEM: This means 'If the redeemer who is more closely related than I will redeem you, behold it is good that he should redeem'.

AND HE SAID "LET IT NOT BE KNOWN": This relates to 'She arose before one could recognize' etc. He was quick to rise <sup>and the</sup> for he said "There is no honour for me in its being known that the woman came to the threshing-floor".

הבי (BRING) is like הבה in 'Come, let us deal wisely with him'.<sup>1</sup>

המטפחח is a cloak (טליח).

SIX OF BARLEY: Six measures of barley, in the measure that was current and customary in the town.

AND SHE SAID "WHO ARE YOU, MY DAUGHTER?" This means 'What has happened to you, my daughter?' A similar usage occurs in 'and they came to their brothers and they said "Who are you?"',<sup>2</sup> which means "What has happened to you?"

AND SHE TOLD HER ALL THAT THE MAN HAD DONE FOR HER: That he had promised to marry her.

1. Ex. i 10.

2. This quotation must be taken from Ju. xviii 8, which reads in MT: ויבאו אל אחיהם צרעה ואשתאל ויאמרו להם אחיהם מה אתם and not, as here, מי אתם.

SHE SAID "THESE SIX OF BARLEY HE GAVE TO ME, FOR HE SAID TO ME  
 "DO NOT GO EMPTY-HANDED TO YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW": "In case you  
 should say "What need have you of six of barley after he has  
 promised to marry you. Behold all that he has is in your hands",  
 for this reason it was necessary for him to explain that he did  
 not give it to me for my needs but he said to me "Do not go  
 empty-handed to your mother-in-law".

AND SHE SAID "STAY, MY DAUGHTER": That is, 'Wait'.

FOR THE MAN WILL NOT REST: After he has sworn to you to finish  
 the matter this morning.

UNLESS HE FINISHES: 'Until the man finishes his business today',  
 which Boaz had promised to Ruth.

#### Chapter IV.

AND HE SAID "TURN ASIDE, SIT HERE, SO-AND-SO" (פלוני אלמוני):  
 'I have a secret and hidden<sup>1</sup> matter to reveal to you'. The same  
 phrase occurs in 'at such and such a place shall be my camp',<sup>2</sup>  
 which is rendered in the Targum 'at a hidden and secret place shall  
 be the place of our camp'.<sup>3</sup> פלוני is from the same root as  
 יפלא in 'is anything hidden from you?',<sup>4</sup> which is rendered in  
 the Targum יחכסי. אלמני indicates 'silence'  
 (אלם) for the matter has been hushed up

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1. This is the commentator's view of the meaning of the phrase  
 פלוני אלמוני; he did not understand it to be an  
 appellation addressed to the redeemer.
  2. II Kings vi 8.
  3. The text of the Targum published in MG (Jerusalem, 1961)  
 reads: לאחר כסי וטמור יהי בית משרי, not as here,  
 לאחר כסי וטמור אחר בית משרנא.
  4. Deut. xvii 8. I have translated the quotation here in accordance  
 with the commentator's view, derived from the Targum's rendering,  
 that the root פלא means 'to be hidden'.

and has not been revealed until this day.

AND I SAID I WOULD MAKE IT KNOWN TO YOU SAYING .... AND I WILL KNOW, FOR THERE IS NO-ONE EXCEPT YOU TO REDEEM AND I COME AFTER YOU: The meaning is 'And I will know, for apart from you there is no other relative (who is entitled) to redeem, except me; after you I am more closely related than any of the (other) relatives of Abimelech (sic!).

ON THE DAY THAT YOU BUY THE FIELD FROM THE HAND OF NAOMI AND FROM THE HAND OF (sic!) RUTH THE MOABITE THE WIFE OF THE DEAD YOU BUY: This means 'How do you want<sup>1</sup> to redeem the field if you do not buy it, in the first place, from the hand of Naomi and from the hand of Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the deceased?' All that had belonged to Abimelech (sic) and all that had belonged to Chilion and Mahlon had passed to their wives under the terms of their marriage contracts and none of the property which was theirs could be bought except by whoever would marry Ruth and Moabite so as to raise up the name of the deceased over his inheritance, for everybody who passes over the field and asks to whom this field belongs is answered that it belongs to so-and-so and when he says 'But did it not belong to Mahlon?', he is answered 'He married his widow'. The name of the dead is remembered over his inheritance.

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1. The text of the commentary is somewhat confused at this point, and I have followed Jellinek's suggestion that **אֵין רֵצִיחַ** should be read for **אֵחָ רֵאשִׁי**.



LEST I DESTROY MY INHERITANCE: 'I cannot redeem this inheritance unless I sell my inheritance, and I do not want to destroy my inheritance for the sake of redeeming the inheritance of somebody else'.

ONE MAN DREW OFF HIS SHOE AND GAVE IT TO THE OTHER: Whereas our present generations purchase property with the corner of their garments, the former generations used to make purchases by means of one man's removing his shoe and giving it to the other.

THIS WAS THE TESTIMONY IN ISRAEL: Purchase was attested in Israel, for after witnesses have borne witness that the property has been handed over to him, there can be no complaints after the purchase.

TO RAISE UP THE NAME OF THE DEAD OVER HIS INHERITANCE AND THAT THE NAME OF THE DEAD BE NOT CUT OFF etc.: Every man of Israel, however remote, who was not one of Elimelech's relatives but who acquired Ruth the Moabite for his wife and who also acquired the field from the hand of Naomi, would even thus (have to) raise up the name of the dead over his inheritance because the real estate was mortgaged to their marriage contracts, but the name of the dead would be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his place. But now that one of Elimelech's kin was marrying Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's wife, the name of the dead would not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his place.

LIKE RACHEL AND LIKE LEAH, THE TWO OF WHOM BUILT etc.: Why did the elders see fit to mention here that 'the two of them built

the house of Israel?' Because they saw that when Boaz said to the redeemer to redeem the field he was prepared to redeem and said 'I will redeem'; when Boaz said to him, further, "On the day that you buy the field from the hand of Naomi and from Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the deceased you have bought to raise up the name of the dead over his inheritance", the redeemer replied "I cannot redeem for myself, lest I destroy my inheritance". The elders discerned that he declined to redeem only because of Ruth the Moabite, for it was beneath his dignity to marry her, and so the elders said to him "May God make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, the two of whom built the house of Israel. Rachel and Leah were idolaters; Jacob came and converted them, and they were married and the two of them built the house of Israel. Moreover our patriarch Perez was born to Tamar and all our families are descended from Tamar, so you, if you marry Ruth the Moabite, will not be disgraced by her. Would that God may make this woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah".

MAKE STRENGTH ( חֵיל ) IN EPHRATHAH: The meaning of this is that "the kingship will come from the seed which God will give you by this young woman", for the חֵיל which is mentioned here is nothing but kingship, as in that case where it says of Saul that 'he made חֵיל'.<sup>1</sup>

AND CALL A NAME IN BETHLEHEM: "Would that you may beget a son, and may he be called by your name". When it says 'name' here it means 'a son', as in the verse 'I will cut off from Babylon

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1. I Sam xiv 18.

name and remnant, offspring and posterity'.<sup>1</sup> In all 24 books, when it says 'name' it means 'son': 'And let my name be called by them'.<sup>2</sup>

MAY HIS NAME BE CALLED IN ISRAEL: 'Would that he may be established in the world and that he may see seed and have a long life'.

MAY HE BE TO YOU A RESTORER OF LIFE AND A SUSTAINER OF YOUR OLD AGE: If you say "Ruth has given birth to him, how shall he be a restorer of life to Naomi?", it is said, therefore, that 'she who loves you has given birth to him'.

AND THEY CALLED HIS NAME OBED: Saying "he shall be serving ( עֹבֵד ) Naomi and sustaining her old age".

THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF PEREZ: Why does the text see fit to trace here the generations of Perez? Only to teach you that because Ruth came to shelter under the wings of the shechinah there came forth from her the right kingship which will blossom in our days. - R. Joseph.

AND THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF PEREZ: Because he has traced the descent of David to the name of Ruth the Moabite, he goes back and traces it to the name of Judah. - R. Solomon.

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1. Is. xiv 22.

2. Gen. xlviii 16.

## D. COMMENTARY OF ABRAHAM IBN EZRA.

In the name of God who strengthens my hand  
 And whose memory my praise makes endure.  
 A commentary on the scroll of Ruth  
 By Abraham the Spaniard.

The utterance of Abraham: Because of David's being the root of the Kingdom of Israel the genealogy of David is written in the Holy Scriptures.

i 1 IT CAME ABOUT IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING:

There are some who say that God judged the judges,<sup>1</sup> for it was through them that the famine came into the land of Israel. And there is one who is so particular about details<sup>2</sup> that he says that the word שָׁפַט is not a verb but a noun as in the phrase 'sword, judgement',<sup>3</sup> but it can be taken in its usual sense for every verb, past or future or intransitive, is conjugated from the infinitive for it is the root.

The 'FROM' in FROM BETHLEHEM, JUDAH, serves for itself and also for his people, because a proper noun cannot be put in the construct.<sup>4</sup>

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1. i.e. reading השפטים as the object of שפט, as in Ruth R. I 1.
  2. מדקדק may be simply 'grammarian', but in the present context the translation given above seems more suitable.
  3. II Chr. xx 9, where שפוט appears as a noun.
  4. That is to say, 'Bethlehem' is not construct to 'Judah', but the mem in מביח לחם is understood to be repeated before יהודה.

i 2 MAHLON AND CHILION: We do not know the events which occurred, by reason of which they were given these names, as we do in the case of Issachar and Moses. By derash they say that they are Joash and Saraph<sup>1</sup> because they took daughters of Moab and it is written there<sup>2</sup> that they had dominion in Moab. Moabitesses were permitted to Israel for the scripture only forbade that Ammonites and Moabites should come into the congregation and that they should marry the daughters of Israel, and in the book of Ezra I will explain this properly.<sup>3</sup>

The reason why FROM BETHLEHEM is written twice<sup>4</sup> is to show that they were natives, and further because it says EPHRATHITES and this word is sometimes used in connection with the place which is called Ephrath, and sometimes for the family of Ephraim. Ephrath was the name of the wife of Caleb son of Hezron,<sup>5</sup> and the place was called by her name in the same way as Egypt. It is not possible that Mahlon and Chilion married these women before they were converted to Judaism and the evidence for this

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1. I Chr. iv 22.
  2. בעלו למואב (ibid) is understood as 'they married into Moab'. This midrash is found in Ruth R. II 4.
  3. No such explanation appears in the commentary on Ezra which appears under ibn Ezra's name in the Rabbinic Bibles and which, in any case, is apparently actually the work of Moses Qimhi. It is, however, difficult to imagine how ibn Ezra could have hoped to find support for this view from Ezra.
  4. Once in v.1, once in v.2.
  5. I Chr. ii 19.

is TO HER PEOPLE AND HER GOD.<sup>1</sup>

i 5 AND THE WOMAN WAS LEFT alone WITHOUT HER TWO SONS AND WITHOUT HER HUSBAND: The text mentions them (in this order) because this is the standard practice when it mentions two things, the emphasis is on the latter; or, it mentions them (in this order) because of the number of her sufferings concerning her sons for they were young men, while her husband was an old man when he died.

i 6 AND SHE RETURNED FROM THE FIELD OF MOAB: The verb expresses intention as in 'And Israel began to fight with Balaq'.<sup>2</sup>

i 8 WITH THE DEAD: These are her sons.

i 9 MAY THE LORD GRANT YOU: A husband.

i 11 HAVE I YET SONS?: Many of our colleagues have thought that this is an argument against those who deny,<sup>3</sup> but they did not know that our fathers limited the duty of levirate marriage to brothers who have the same father and not to those who have

1. i 15. His argument is that Orpah could not have 'returned to her god' if she had not been converted to Judaism in the first place. The traditional Rabbinic viewpoint was that the women had not been proselytized before their marriage.

2. וילחם ישראל עם בלק . If my rendering is correct this must be a quotation but I have been unable to find its source.

3. The reference is to the Qaraites. In his comment on Deut. xxv 5 ibn Ezra says, "They (the Qaraites) also say that it was not actual brothers (on whom the duty of levirate marriage was imposed) but relatives (in general), and they cite as proof the case of Boaz; but they have not said anything for there is no mention there of yibbum, only of ge'ullah". In this comment he points out that the Rabbanite view cannot be supported from Ruth either, for the reason that levirate marriage would not have applied in these circumstances.

the same mother only. She said to them, "If there were sons in my womb, I would have given them to you instead of the dead". But this would have been done out of love and not as levirate marriage.

i 13 WOULD YOU WAIT FOR THEM?: The nun (in הלהך) is instead of nem. The converse is found in VERY BITTER TO ME ON ACCOUNT OF YOU ( מכם ), and in THEY ( המה ) CAME TO BETHLEHEM. The word חשברונה means 'attachment' when used with the letter lamedh or with the word אל, as in עיני כל אליך ישברו<sup>1</sup>.

חעגנה belongs to the Niphal conjugation, and there is no other example of the verb.

NOT TO BELONG TO A MAN: That is, each one of them to her own man, as in 'the two of them were hanged on a tree'.<sup>2</sup>

NO, MY DAUGHTERS: That is to say, "Do not go with me".

FOR THERE HAS GONE OUT AGAINST ME: The decree of God which goes out from his presence or which has been delivered and has gone out against me until it has been seen.

THE HAND OF THE LORD: This means 'a blow', for in using the word 'hand' the text is speaking metaphorically.<sup>71</sup>

1. Ps. cxlv 15.

2. Est. ii 23, presumably meaning that each man was hanged on a separate tree or gallows.

i 15 YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW HAS GONE BACK: The declension of 'sister-in-law' we have already explained in the Torah.<sup>1</sup>

TO HER PEOPLE AND HER GODS: This shows that they had been converted to Judaism.

i 16 DO NOT ENTREAT ME: The meaning of **וְלֹא** is persuasion and the preposition **בְּ** is always found with it as in 'Entreat Ephron for me',<sup>2</sup> and it is not a strange word, except for (the occurrence with the meaning) 'I will spare no man',<sup>3</sup> and I will explain this in that place.

YOUR PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE: "I will never forsake the Torah of Israel and the declaration of the unity of God".

i 18 **מִתְאַמְצָה** : Hithpael conjugation.

i 19 **וַחֲהֵם** : From the Niphal conjugation of a double 'ayin verb.

IS THIS NAOMI?: For Elimelech and his wife were of the great ones of Israel.

i 20 DO NOT CALL ME NAOMI, CALL ME MARA: Although (Mara) is

1. In his comment on Deut. xxv 5f., ibn Ezra observes that **בְּמַחֲ** is used here 'because they were married to two brothers'.
2. Gen. xxiii 8.
3. Is. xlvii 3, where ibn Ezra explains (his commentary is printed in MG) **וְלֹא אֶפְגַּע אִישׁ** as meaning 'I will not accept the intercession of any man'.



written with an aleph it behaves in the same way as a word with silent he on the end. The aleph in מרא is instead of he, and the word דשא<sup>1</sup> is like it. In the opinion of R. Judah<sup>2</sup> and in my opinion, נעם is something pleasant, and bitterness is the opposite of pleasantness. נעם when applied to food is sweetness.

i 21 FULL: (With) sons and money.

AND THE LORD HAS ANSWERED ME: There are some who say that ענה is from the same root as 'to be humbled before me',<sup>3</sup> but in my opinion it is from the same root as 'you shall not answer your neighbour',<sup>4</sup> where the meaning is similar to 'you renew your witnesses against me'.<sup>5</sup>

AND THE ALMIGHTY HAS TREATED ME BADLY: It is like saying 'he afflicted' and a similar example is 'creator of evil'.<sup>6</sup> Either (the meaning is) 'he has treated me badly on account of my rebellion', or the text is to be understood in the way in which the word is normally used, and this is the correct meaning.

i 22 The he in השבה, as it is found here, is the definite

1. Jer. i 11.

2. Judah ibn Daud Hayyuj, the grammarian.

3. לענוה מפני Ex. x 3.

4. Ex. xx 16.

5. Job x 18.

6. Is. xlv 7.

article. And the reason why it says AND NAOMI RETURNED a second time is to connect the time of their return with the beginning of the barley harvest on account of Ruth's gleaning.

ii 1 מוֹדֵי: A relative who is known, as in 'and call wisdom מוֹדֵ.<sup>1</sup>

TO HER HUSBAND: That is, 'through her husband'. The lamedh is the same as in the verse 'say with regard to me ( לִי ), "He is my brother"'.<sup>2</sup>

BOAZ: Our teachers, of blessed memory, said that he was Ibzan who once judged Israel.<sup>3</sup>

ii 2 AFTER HIM IN WHOSE EYES I FIND FAVOUR: Some say that the suffix refers to Boaz who has been mentioned,<sup>4</sup> and the meaning is 'Perhaps this will be'. But it is my opinion that the suffix refers to the owner of the field although he is not mentioned because it says AND HER CHANCE HAPPENED which means 'this is the way it happened'.

ii 4 THE LORD BE WITH YOU: To help you. (He said this) because they were toiling.

THE LORD BLESS YOU: May he give his blessing on the harvest.

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1. Prov. vii 4.

2. Gen. xx 13.

3. This identification is made in B.B. 91a.)

4. Reading 'after I have found favour in his eyes'.

ii 5 WHOSE IS THIS YOUNG WOMAN?: He thought she was someone's wife. Perhaps he asked the young man because he saw that she was dressed in the dress of her own land. Appearances also differed on account of the differences in climate. The midrashic exegesis is well-known.

ii 7 AND SHE CAME AND HAS REMAINED: She occupied herself continuously with her needs and not with anything else, so that he should not distrust her on account of her beauty.

זֶה שְׁבֹתָהּ הַבֵּיחַ מֵעַט : ( מֵעַט means) 'a short time'.

It says 'her sitting' because she sat down, and the meaning of 'house' is 'booth'.

ii 8 הַעֲבֹדִי is pointed with shurug instead of holem, like יִשְׁפֹּטוּ<sup>1</sup>, and it is a strange word because its accent is milra'. Perhaps this is because it is in an 'absolute' state.

The nun in חֲדָבְקִין is superfluous.

ii 9 וְצִמְחָה : The verb צִמַּח behaves like a lamedh he verb.

ii 11 הַגֵּר הַגֵּר לִי : It must be Pual for the subject is not given.

WHOM YOU DID NOT KNOW: To dwell with them.

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1. Ex. xviii 26.

ii 12 משכרח : The form of this word is the same as  
 מחכונ<sup>1</sup>, and it is a noun from the heavy declension, on  
 account of the mem.

ii 13 AND I AM NOT: I am not worthy to be as one of your  
 maidservants.

ii 14 IN THE VINEGAR: On account of the heat.

ותותר : It is pointed thus because it is the end of the  
 verse, like אל חוסר<sup>2</sup>.

ויצבט : There is no other occurrence of this word but it  
 means 'to give'.

ii 16 של של : From the root שלל. Some say it means  
 'inadvertant act' as in על השל 'for the carelessness'.<sup>3</sup>

ii 17 AND IT WAS ABOUT AN EPHAH OF BARLEY: A man once asked  
 me "What is the meaning of 'about an ephah of barley'?" I said  
 to him "There is no reason to ask this for the scripture tells  
 what it was". Then I was little esteemed by him and he said to  
 me that he had a meaning, to which I remained silent and did  
 not ask him. He came again another day and told me that he  
 had many meanings. One: that Ruth saw through prophecy that

1. Ex. v 8.

2. Job xl 32.

3. II Sam. vi 7.

one of her descendants would one day set up a pillar in the name of her husband, and the meaning of **אִפָּה** is 96 - (the number of the) pomegranates which were on that pillar, and this by gematria is **אִפָּה**. And the interpretation of **שְׁעוּרִים** is 'measures' (**שְׁעוּרִים**) as in 'as he has calculated (**שָׁעַר**) in his soul'.<sup>1</sup> Another meaning: the two words are Aramaic and Hebrew, and it is that (Ruth) saw that Absalom would be hanged, for he was one of her descendants. **כ** and **א** are an allusion to Absalom's age at his death, and afterwards (comes) 'an ephah of hairs' (**שְׁעָרִים**) - the plural is used because he had a lot of it. Another meaning: the first letter of **כֹּאִפָּה** and the first letter of **שְׁעוּרִים** make, by gematria, **יֵשׁ**, who was a perfectly righteous man. Then he was happy and his heart was at peace.

ii 20 BLESSED BE THE LORD WHO HAS NOT FORSAKEN HIS KINDNESS:  
This is a sign that he had shown kindness at the beginning to Elimelech and his sons when he was a judge.

THE LIVING: Naomi and Ruth.

HE IS ONE OF OUR REDEEMERS: Redemption is not levirate marriage, it is a different custom.

ii 22 THAT YOU SHOULD GO OUT to glean WITH HIS YOUNG WOMEN:

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1. Prov. xxiii 7.

and not with (his young men.<sup>1</sup> Or the meaning of 'with the young men who are mine' may be 'with one of) the young men', whom he had appointed over the male and female reapers.

THAT THEY MAY NOT MOLEST YOU: The subject is 'men', and there are many examples of this.

ii 23 AND SHE DWELT WITH ( אַ ) HER MOTHER-IN-LAW: אַ here means 'with' ( עַ ).

iii 1 REST: For there is no rest for a woman unless she is married.<sup>2</sup>

iii 2 The word מוֹדַעְתָּנוּ is strange; the taw is superfluous.

iii 3 ANOINT: (With) oil, for it has a pleasant smell, and this was the custom of the Israelites, both men and women.

AND PUT ON YOUR CLOAK: That is, good clothes,<sup>3</sup> for she did not reap in them.

iii 4 מַרְגְּלוּחָיו is the same as רַגְלָיו, 'his feet', and it is used in this way in Daniel,<sup>4</sup> so the commentator is mistaken

1. The point of this comment is that Ruth has reported Boaz as instructing her to accompany his 'young men' (v. 21), although Boaz actually said 'young women' (v. 8). The second comment tries to justify this anomaly in the text by suggesting that Boaz may have given Ruth a second (and unrecorded) piece of advice - that she should place herself under the protection of the overseer. The section between the brackets does not appear in the modern editions of MG, having apparently been dropped through homoioteleuton.
2. A similar comment in Ruth R. II 15 is applied to i 9 - 'May you find rest, each in her husband's house'.
3. שְׂמֹלֶךְ is pointed as a plural noun in MT.
4. Dan. x 6.

who thinks that it was a pillow placed under the feet in the way that מראשוהיו<sup>1</sup> is (a pillow) placed under the head.

iii 6 וְצִוְּתָהּ : (The form is) the same as וְכַעֲסָתָה, 'she provoked her'.<sup>2</sup>

iii 8 וַיִּלְפַּח : The Niphal conjugation of the verb which occurs in 'the paths of their ways turn aside'.<sup>3</sup> The meaning is 'distortion', and it is the same in the case of וַיִּלְפַּח שְׂמֻשׁוֹן<sup>4</sup> and it is not 'touching'. The meaning is that he turned from side to side.

AND BEHOLD, A WOMAN: It is possible that she said to him, "Don't be afraid", and a woman's voice is always recognizable, or that there was much moonlight and he could see that she had no beard. He would also be able to recognize her (as a woman) by her clothes.

iii 9 AND SPREAD: This is a hint that he should marry her.

FOR YOU ARE A REDEEMER: Such was the custom of all Israel, for Naomi had told her.

1. Gen. xxviii 11 et al.

2. I Sam i 6. The purpose of the comment is to show that the punctuation with daghesh in the taw indicates the 3rd person sing., fem., perfect of a lamedh he, with the suffix 3 f. s.

3. יִלְפָחוּ אֲרוֹחוֹ דְרָכָם Job vi 18.

4. Ju. xvi 29, usually interpreted 'And Samson grasped'. On the basis of this verse traditional Rabbinic exegesis had explained the verb וַיִּלְפַּח here as 'he was seized'. Cf. above Rashi ad loc.

iii 10 YOUR FORMER KINDNESS THAN THE LATTER: For she had shown kindness to her husband just as Naomi had said. It is unlikely that he was referring to her conversion.

WHETHER POOR OR RICH: Everyone loved her on account of her beauty.

iii 11 אִשָּׁה חַיִּל : I will comment on this in Proverbs.<sup>1</sup>

iii 12 The mem on the end of וְאִמָּנוּם is superfluous, like the mem in חֲנָם .

iii 13 IF HE WILL REDEEM YOU, GOOD: There are some who say that Tob ('good') was the redeemer's name,<sup>2</sup> but if it were so why did the scripture say in the scroll 'Turn aside, sit here, so-and-so'? The meaning is simply, 'If the redeemer will redeem you, it will be good for you when he redeems you for he is an important man'.

iii 15 AND HE MEASURED SIX BARLEY: The text records what he gave her and by derash (this was taken to indicate) that six righteous men would descend from her.<sup>3</sup>

1. In the commentary on Proverbs which appears in MG under ibn Ezra's name (which, however, is apparently actually the work of Moses Qimhi - see above p.47) the following comment is attached to the phrase אִשָּׁה חַיִּל מִי יִמְצָא (Prov. xxxi 10):  
חַיִּל is money and the significance of the verse is 'who is able to find a woman who acquires wealth and money by her wisdom?'

2. Ruth R. VI 3. Cf. Rashi on iii 12.

3. These six men are listed in San. 93ab. See also above p.143 n.1.



iii 16 WHO ARE YOU, MY DAUGHTER?: It is possible that she did not see her before she opened the door for her to come in according to custom, and the text omits the reply "I am Ruth". A similar omission occurs in 'call him and let him eat bread', where the text continues 'And Moses was willing'.<sup>1</sup> R. Jonah the grammarian<sup>2</sup> said that מ' is used here to mean 'what?', and the meaning of the phrase is 'what has happened to you?' He said to me that there is a similar case in the phrase 'who is your name',<sup>3</sup> for it is not customary for 'who' to be used except in reference to a human being. It is my opinion that 'your name' is a noun and therefore מ' can be used (in this way).

(WHAT) THE MAN HAD DONE FOR HER: The oath.

iii 18 HOW THE MATTER WILL FALL: 'Fall' is used because all decisions come from heaven. The word does not here mean 'fail' as in 'not one word has fallen'.<sup>4</sup>

iv 1 WENT UP TO THE GATE: Such was the custom and the law for assembly.

פלונ' אלמוני : Some say that פלונ' comes from the verb 'to be hidden' (פלא) and אלמוני comes from אלם, 'to be mute, ignorant'.<sup>5</sup> It is used when the name (of the person

1. Ex. ii 20, 21.

2. Jonah ibn Janah, Spanish philologist of the first half of the eleventh century.

3. מ' שמך Ju. xiii 17; similarly, in Aramaic, Ezra v 4.

4. I Kings viii 56.

5. Rashi derives פלונ' from the root פלא, but אלמוני from אלמוץ 'a widower'. The derivation of אלמוני from אלם is attributed to R. Samuel b. Nahman in Ruth R. VII 7.

addressed) is not known to the speaker.

iv 3 THE PORTION OF THE FIELD: It is possible that the field was a large one and Elimelech owned only a portion of it.

iv 4 IF HE WILL NOT REDEEM: R. Jonah said that 'if you will not redeem' would be more appropriate (and that the passage requires emendation) in the same way as 'let him not be faithless to the wife of thy youth',<sup>1</sup> but this is not possible, for there the word כְּגִוִּי refers to the word בַּחֲרִים. The interpretation here is 'if the redeemer will not redeem her, I will know that there is no redeemer nearer than you'.<sup>2</sup>

iv 5 THE WIFE OF THE DEAD YOU HAVE BOUGHT: The meaning of this word is 'you will buy'; the past tense is used instead of the future. For the widow had a marriage contract, the mother (of the dead man) inherits the rest. The Kethibh is קָנִיָּה, and this means 'I will buy'.

iv 6 LEST I DESTROY MY INHERITANCE: He had a great inheritance. Some say this is an allusion to his wife.

REDEEM FOR YOURSELF: Behold I have given you authority, for

1. Mal. ii 15.

2. Ibn Ezra thus disputes that the context requires the verb to be in the 2nd person singular since Boaz is speaking directly to the redeemer. Salmon ben Yeroham, arguing in favour of the text as it stands, suggested that Boaz had turned momentarily to speak to the elders (see above p.109), and ibn Ezra may have held a similar view.

I AM NOT ABLE.

iv 7      **לפנים** : In earlier days which have not passed by,  
just as the 'face' of anything is the foremost part.

CONCERNING REDEMPTION: If a man redeemed or exchanged a field  
for a field.

**ההעודה** is a derivative of **עדה** . 'In this manner  
they used to testify'. Some commentators have used the word  
**העודה** as meaning 'habituation' and 'custom', but the former  
meaning is correct.

iv 8      **AND HE DREW OFF HIS SHOE:** Boaz drew off his shoe and  
gave it to the redeemer. And this is, as our sages of blessed  
memory said, an exchange, and its significance is 'You have  
received this shoe, now give your right of redemption in its  
place'. The reason why a shoe was used is because it was  
always convenient. It would not be possible for a man to take  
off his shirt or trousers, for he would not want to leave himself  
naked. Some say that the redeemer took off his shoe and gave it  
to Boaz, the significance being 'As I give you this shoe, so I  
give you the right of redemption'.

iv 11      **LIKE RACHEL AND LIKE LEAH:** Rachel is placed first  
because she was Jacob's first wife in his intention.

**MAKE WEALTH:** This expression is like '(my hand) has made me this  
wealth',<sup>1</sup> for you have not taken her for the sake of money.

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1. Deut. viii 17.

iv 14 WHO HAS NOT LEFT YOU WITHOUT A REDEEMER: The meaning is 'because the name of the dead has been raised up over his inheritance'.

iv 16 וּלְכַלְכֵּל : The meaning is found in 'and Joseph sustained'.<sup>1</sup> Some say it is like 'who can endure'<sup>2</sup> the day of his coming'.

iv 17 A SON IS BORN TO NAOMI: It is like saying 'and he was a son to her'.

FATHER OF DAVID: It is possible that this refers to Jesse and also to Obed, like 'the God of my father Abraham, and the God of my father Isaac'.<sup>3</sup> It may be deduced that Nahshon died in the wilderness, for it is not possible that he would have been a youth when he was a standard-bearer and a leader of Israel at the first.<sup>4</sup> Another (proof that Nahshon died in the wilderness is) that the scripture would have mentioned his entering the land of Israel (if he had done so) and nobody else would have been leader of the tribe (had he still been alive). Between the entry into the land of Israel and the birth of David there were 366 years,<sup>5</sup> for the scripture says 'in the four hundred and eightieth year,

1. וּלְכַלְכֵּל, Gen. xlvii 12.
2. מְכַלְכֵּל, Mal. iii 2.
3. Gen. xxxii 10.
4. Num. i 7, ii 3, x 14.
5. Strangely, the modern editions of MG read שָׁע"ו - 376, which is arithmetically incorrect. The 3rd and 5th Biblia Rabbinica read, correctly, שָׁס"ו.

which was the fourth year of King Solomon',<sup>1</sup> and David lived seventy years and the Israelites walked in the wilderness for forty years. So, if we say that Salmon was only one year old when he arrived in the land of Israel, there are four (generations in this period of 366 years) - Salmon, Boaz, Obed and Jesse - and each man begot his son when he was ninety-one years old. If anyone objects and says that Nahshon was less than twenty years old when he set out from Egypt, let us suppose that he was 18 years old and, since the period of the Israelite wandering in the wilderness is not lessened, there are now five (generations to be fitted into this period) and each man begot his son when he was eighty-four years old.<sup>2</sup> And this is correct, in my view, for Boaz was an old man, as we know because he said to Ruth 'Not to have gone after young men'.<sup>3</sup> Jesse, too, was an old man when he begot David, for David was his eighth son. It is possible that Obed was so called because an old man had begotten him, who only married the woman for the sake of the glory of God, and also the mother forsook her religion and her nativeland and sought refuge in the shadow of the wings of God. Therefore the son was called Servant of God, for most children are like their father and mother, for they are their roots.

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1. I Kings vi 2.

2. This view ignores the arguments that Nahshon must have died in the wilderness, since he would have been 58 at the time of the entry into Palestine and must have lived at least another 26 years in order to beget a son at age 84.

3. Ruth iii 10.

## E. COMMENTARY ATTRIBUTED TO DAVID QIMHI.

i 1 IT CAME ABOUT IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES WERE JUDGING:

When the Israelites were governed by the judges, before Saul became king, and this was in the days of Ibzan and our teachers - may their memory be blessed - have said "Ibzan is Boaz".<sup>1</sup>

A MAN WENT: He went because of the severity of the famine, in accordance with the teaching 'When there is a famine in the town, withdraw your feet.'<sup>2</sup>

i 2 EPHRATHITES: This comes from the name of the city which is called Ephrathah.

i 4 MOABITE WOMEN: They had been converted to Judaism.

i 12 IF I SAID I HAVE HOPE: Even if I said, "There is hope for me of (another) pregnancy".

i 13 WOULD YOU WAIT FOR THEM?: This is a (rhetorical) question.

העגנה : This is to be explained from the word עִגְנוֹנָה<sup>3</sup> which is in the language of our teachers.

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1. B.B. 91a.

2. B.Q. 60b.

3. I have been unable to trace this word in the Talmud, unless it is a mistake for עִגְנוֹנָא - the Aramaic form of עִגְיוֹן, 'tying, holding fast, an anchor' - which occurs in Git. 3a and Yeb. 88a.

ii 7      **זו שכחה הביתה מעט** : For a short time she was sitting in the house but Ruth proceeded<sup>1</sup> to glean and to bring back (what she had gleaned) to her mother-in-law.

ii 13    I AM NOT AS ONE OF YOUR MAIDSERVANTS: I am not as important even as one of your maidservants.

ii 14      **ק'יצבט** : There is no other example of this word and its meaning, according to the context, is 'to pick up'.

ii 16    AND EVEN PULL OUT ( **של חשלו** ) FOR HER: 'Behave as if you are forgetting'. The same verb is found in the verse 'and the iron shall fall'.<sup>2</sup>

**צבחים** : These are little sheaves. The word does not occur elsewhere in the scripture but it occurs in the Mishnah, in the phrase **מניחין צבחים או כרוכות**.<sup>3</sup>

iii 2    HE IS WINNOWING AT THE THRESHING-FLOOR: The chaff. (The word for 'winnowing') in our language is **נירבילדי**.<sup>4</sup>

iii 7    THE HEAP ( **הערמה** ): It is the same word as in 'heaps

1. This must be the general sense of the comment, although the word **מזדרות** cannot be identified.

2. **ונשל הברזל** Deut. xix 5. The quotation is identified in the margin of the commentary, erroneously, thus: **מברי' י'ג ה'**

3. I have been unable to find the source of this quotation. Kassovsky's Concordance to the Mishnah lists a phrase which may be this one but the source given there - Zebahim X 9 - does not exist.

4. Neither the word nor the language to which it belongs can be positively identified, but it may be related to the Spanish verb bieldar, 'to winnow'. See above p. 54.

of wheat'.<sup>1</sup>

iii 8 וִילַפַּח : This verb is also found in the phrase 'and Samson grasped' ( וִילַפַּח ),<sup>2</sup> where it means 'and he seized' ( וִיאַחֲזֶה ). Here it means 'he seized his limbs' as a man does when he is pulling himself together.<sup>3</sup>

iii 9 SPREAD YOUR WING: 'You will take me as a wife, to raise up seed to my husband.

FOR YOU ARE A REDEEMER: (You are entitled) to redeem my husband's inheritance as it is said 'and his redeemer who is related to him shall come'.<sup>4</sup> In the Torah there is no obligation except to redeem the inheritance of his relative; to marry his (relative's) wife and to raise up seed for him was not obligatory. But they had a custom that, when any man, who died without children, had no brother to enter into levirate marriage with his wife, his relative, who was not prohibited (by the law of incest) from marriage to his wife, would go and marry her and raise up seed for him in the manner of a yabam. They used to observe and maintain this custom as (if it were) the commandment of levirate marriage which is in the Torah.

1. Song vii 3.

2. Ju. xvi 29.

3. I take this to be the meaning of המַחֲפִק here. The idea is apparently that a man, on waking, draws together his arms and legs which were spread out when he was asleep.

4. Lev. xxv 25.



iii 12 NEARER THAN I: It is permissible for him to marry you and he is eligible to redeem before me.

iii 15 BRING ( הַבִּי ) THE CLOAK: Bring ( חֲנִי ) the cloak.

SIX BARLEY: Six seahs of barley.

iv 1 SO-AND-SO ( פִּלּוֹנִי אֶלְמוֹנִי ): Because his name is not mentioned or made known he is called 'So-and-so'. פִּלּוֹנִי is from the same root as the verb in 'If anything is too difficult for you'.<sup>1</sup> אֶלְמוֹנִי is like עֶלְמוֹנִי. That is to say, his name is hidden ( עָלֹם ) and concealed for it is not recorded.

iv 5 BOAZ SAID, "ON THE DAY THAT YOU BUY FROM THE HAND ...": 'If you buy it you must buy it thus from the hand of Naomi and from the hand of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased, and marry her so as to raise up a name to the deceased, for they do not wish for anything else except that whoever wishes to redeem shall raise up a name to his brother'.

iv 6 LEST I DESTROY MY INHERITANCE: By having in one house two women who are <sup>enemies</sup> enemies to one another.

iv 7 THIS FORMERLY IN ISRAEL: These are words of the narrator which mean 'This was the custom at that time in Israel'.

1. כִּי יִפְּלֵא מִמֶּךָ דְּבַר, Deut. xvii 8. The Anonymous Rabbi, who also quotes this passage, apparently understood the root פִּלּא to mean 'to be hidden'. Qimhi seems also to have understood it in this way.

CONCERNING REDEMPTION: This is selling.

AND CONCERNING EXCHANGE: This is changing.

A MAN DREW OFF HIS SHOE: This is for ratification, as we ratify with a scarf. HIS SHOE means 'his handshoe' or, as we say in our language, 'glove'.<sup>1</sup>

AND THIS WAS TESTIMONY: This law and this custom were observed in Israel.

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1. This interpretation of the Hebrew נעלו שליו גיונסו בלעז is achieved by reading שליו as של יד and taking it in conjunction with נעלו, thus leaving גיונסו as the vernacular word for 'glove' - it appears to represent something like the Spanish guante or Italian guanto. (See also above p.54 ).

## Part III

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXEGESIS.

## A. PARAPHRASE AND EXPANSION OF THE NARRATIVE.

The simplest and most direct method of exegesis is paraphrase and we find that this was widely used by the translators of the Ancient Versions to express the meaning of a text when literal translation proved inadequate. In our description of the general characteristics of the Septuagint we have already referred<sup>1</sup> to that version's reading of ἔκαστη for אשה in the expressions אשה ביה אמה (i 8) and אשה ביה אישה (i 9) and to its use of a statement in the negative to convey the sense of the rhetorical question employed by the Hebrew text in i 11 - "Have I yet sons in my womb?" - and i 13 - "Would you wait for them?" We may note here some further examples.

The use of a positive statement in Greek to express a Hebrew rhetorical negative question occurs in ii 9: when Boaz says, according to the Massoretic Text, "Have I not instructed my young men ...?" the Septuagint reads "Behold, I have instructed ....". For the figurative usage of the word 'gate' (iii 11; iv 10) the Greek version has 'tribe' (φυλή) which may be considered a paraphrase although it is possible that

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1. P. 10.

the paraphrase took place within the Greek tradition, as the result of the revision of an earlier and more literal Greek translation ( πύλη : as suggested by BH3), rather than at the time of the translation from Hebrew. The Septuagint's rendering of פלני אלמני (iv 1) by κρύφις 'O hidden one' - may also be considered paraphrase, though it must be pointed out that the translator probably believed this to be the significance of the Hebrew expression: we shall see later<sup>1</sup> in this study that the view was widely held in Rabbinic circles that פלני is derived from the root פלא and that the meaning of this root is 'to be hidden'. The difficult Hebrew text in the second half of Ruth ii 7 - זה שבחה הבית מעט - could only be represented by paraphrase and the Septuagint reads 'She has not rested in the field for a little'. The use of the word 'field' where the Massoretic Text has 'house' might give ground for suspicion that the Hebrew original used by the Greek translator diverged at this point from the Massoretic text but it is perhaps more likely that the translator, finding difficulty with the Hebrew, simply supplied a few words which he considered appropriate to the context. Another place where the Septuagint translator experienced difficulty is Ruth iv 5, where the Massoretic Text has the corruption ומאח רוח; having rendered this in Greek as καὶ παρὰ Ρουθ he was left without an object for the verb קנייה in the second part of the verse and,

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1. Below p.293f.

forced to resort to paraphrase, he produced 'and you must acquire her' (καὶ αὐτὴν κτήσασθαί σε δεῖ) from the Qere

קָנִיתָ .

Paraphrase is used extensively by the Peshitta and to record all the examples a translation of the whole book in that version would be required, but we may mention as examples the reading 'Far be it from me that I should turn back and leave you' for 'Do not entreat me to go back from after you' (i 16); 'Be watching where they reap' for 'Let your eyes be upon the field where they are reaping' (ii 9) and 'In whose field I worked' for 'with whom I worked' (ii 19). Like the Septuagint, the Peshitta rendered the Hebrew 'gate' as 'tribe' (iii 11; iv 10), and also found it necessary to employ paraphrase to represent the second half of ii 7: the Peshitta there reads 'she has been gleaning from early morning even until the rest-period'. The Syriac translator apparently did not understand the phrase פִּלְנִי אֶלְמִנִי (iv 1) for his version reads at that point 'and he said to him "What is it?"': he may have understood אֶלְמִנִי as an abbreviation for אָמַר לָהּ מִנּוּ.<sup>1</sup>

The Targumist, when he was not adding extensive comments of a haggadic nature, was fairly faithful to the Hebrew text

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1. This suggestion, attributed to A. Hübsch, Die fünf Megilloth nebst dem syrischen Thargum genannt Peschitto, Prague 1866, is cited by D. Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth in der Midrasch-Literatur, Leipzig 1901, p.76 n.1.

but in his work, too, we find paraphrase used. As in the other versions paraphrase was employed for the second part of Ruth ii 7 which, in the Targum, reads 'It is only a short time that she has sat in the house for a little'. The Aramaic version of פִּלְנִי אֶלְמִנִי (iv 1) is 'O man whose ways are modest'; it would seem that this probably rests on the view mentioned above that פִּלְנִי means 'hidden' and that in this context it was interpreted to mean something like 'self-effacing'. To note a few further examples of paraphrase in the Targum we may mention the rendering of 'Let your eyes be upon the field' (ii 9) as 'Be attending to the field' which is, in fact, a good, though not a literal, translation of the Hebrew. 'An ephah' (ii 17) becomes 'three seahs' in the Targum and אִשָּׁה חַיִּל (iii 11) is translated as 'a righteous woman'. The standard types of paraphrase which are used by the Targums in general also appear and God is spoken of and referred to with reverence and circumlocution. Thus, whereas Naomi says, in the Hebrew text, "Yahweh has testified against me" (i 21), the Targum makes her say "My guilt has been attested for me from before the Lord". The greeting of Boaz to his reapers "Yahweh be with you" (ii 4) becomes in the Targum "May the word of the Lord be your strength", and when Boaz swears חַי יְהוָה - "As Yahweh lives" (iii 13) - the Targum makes him say "I say with an oath before the Lord"; when the women say to Naomi "Blessed be Yahweh" (iv 14) the Targumist alters their words to "Blessed be the name of the Lord". Nor may Yahweh be referred to, in the Targumist's view, in anthropomorphic terms: Ruth no longer comes to shelter 'under his wings' (ii 12) but 'under the shadow of his glorious shechinah',

and when Naomi says "Yahweh's hand has gone forth against me" (i 13) the Targum reads 'there has gone out against me a blow from before the Lord'.

A similar style of circumlocution and paraphrase may be detected in the Peshitta, where Orpah returns, not 'to her gods' (i 15) as in the Massoretic text, but 'to the house of her parents': one might infer from this that the Syriac tradition was unwilling to admit the possible existence of gods other than Israel's god. The Peshitta's version of Naomi's complaint that Shaddai 'has ill-treated me' (i 21) - 'and what is happening by his hand has brought evil upon me' - is, perhaps, also to be treated as a 'Targumic' type of circumlocution, and it may be noted that the Syriac version also avoids the use of the divine name in Boaz's greeting to his reapers by reverting to paraphrase and rendering 'Peace be with you' (ii 4). It has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that the translator was thinking, in making this paraphrase, of the Rabbinic dictum **שלום שמו של הקב"ה** - 'Peace is the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He' - and this is possible, though it is perhaps more likely that he simply substituted the conventional and contemporary form of greeting in order to avoid the use of the divine name. It must be observed, in this connection, that the Peshitta omits completely the oath of Boaz (iii 13) which, as has been said, is represented in the Targum by paraphrase, and it may be supposed that the excision was

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1. Wessel, Das Targum zum Buche Ruth, p.25, cited by Hartmann, op. cit. p.35 n.6.

motivated by a similar attitude of respect for the divine name.

While discussing the use of paraphrase by the Ancient Versions we must mention the Targum's paraphrase of 'Spread your skirt over your maidservant' (iii 9) by 'Let your name be called over your maidservant to take (her) as a wife': it would seem that this was undoubtedly employed in order to preclude the sexual allusion to which the phrase 'Spread your skirt over ....' admits. It will be seen as this study progresses that Rabbinic exegesis was extremely concerned to stress that nothing improper passed between Ruth and Boaz during the night they spent together at the threshing-floor. Various methods were used at various times to express this point of view but the present case is the only example of the use of paraphrase for that purpose. The other methods will be mentioned in due course.<sup>1</sup>

Closely akin to, and in some ways difficult to distinguish from, paraphrase is the simple narrative expansion which abounds in the Targum but which appears in the other versions as well and, indeed, may also be found in the mediaeval commentaries. At various places the versions have added to the story apparently with the purpose in mind of removing any possibility of misunderstanding and, perhaps, of adding literary polish to

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1. See, especially, below p.228f.



the narrative. By the latter the translators would seem to have understood that as much detail as possible should be added to their translation.

Thus, in the very first verse of the story, 'a famine in the land' becomes 'a great famine in the land of Israel' in the Targum while, in case there should be any doubt as to the reason for Elimelech's emigration, the Peshitta adds, at the end of this verse, 'because the famine was severe in the land'. Following the notice of Elimelech's death it would seem that there can be little doubt as to the significance of the statement that 'she (i.e. Naomi) was left, and her two sons' (i 3) but still the Targumist wrote 'she was left a widow and her two sons orphans', and, similarly, when the Hebrew text observes, following the death of Mahlon and Chilion, that 'the woman was left without ( **מ** ) her two sons and without her husband' (i 5), the Targum reads 'the woman was left, bereaved of her two sons and a widow of her husband'. The reason for these additions becomes apparent in a later period when Salmon ben Yeroham expanded the latter phrase in the same way as the Targum adding the comment 'for it cannot rightly be said that 'Reuben was left from Simeon''. This shows that the privative usage of **מ** was not acknowledged and that this preposition was understood only in its partitive sense: the Hebrew text was understood to say literally 'she was left of (or 'from') her two sons and of (or 'from') her husband' and this required interpretation. The Targumist (and later Salmon) provided this interpretation in the manner described.

No explanation is readily available, however, for the Targumist's rendering of 'Moabite women (or 'wives')' (i 14) as 'foreign women (or 'wives') from the daughters of Moab' unless it be that he made a virtue of ponderous phraseology; nor is there any obvious motive for the addition, in both the Septuagint and the Peshitta, of the numeral 'two' to 'her daughters-in-law' (i 4), except for an interest in fixing such precise details, an interest similar, perhaps, to that which led the Targumist to identify 'his people', in the same verse, by the addition of 'the house of Israel'. The Targum and the Peshitta both, apparently, felt a need to identify 'the dead' (i 8) to whom Naomi refers; the former reads 'your husbands who are asleep' and, in passing, we may draw attention to the euphemism, while the latter reads 'with my two sons who are dead'. The same two versions obviously felt that **יְהוָה יִתֵּן** (i 9) requires a direct object for both provide one, the Syriac adding 'mercy' and the Targum 'a perfect reward for the kindness which you have shown to me, and through that reward ....', these last words forming the connection with the phrase which follows in the Massoretic text - 'May you find rest'. It should, perhaps, also be noted that the feeling that **יְהוָה** in this verse requires an object is evidenced by Ruth Rabbah II 15 where the following 'object' is attributed to R. Jose: 'All the boons and consolations which the Holy One, blessed be He, is destined to bestow on Solomon'. With this we are plunged deep into midrash and, indeed, it seems likely that this comment did not originally apply to this verse but rather to Boaz's

pronouncement 'May your reward be complete ( <sup>פניו</sup>שלמה, which was misread <sup>פניו</sup>שלמה )' (ii 12), for there can be no justification for dragging Solomon in at this point. But we are not immediately concerned with midrashic interpretation at this point - that will be discussed below - only with attempts to provide a direct object for the verb **יחן** in i 9 and before passing on from that verse we must mention that ibn Ezra adds, in his commentary, the object 'a husband'.

In the following verse (i 10) the statement of Orpah and Ruth 'We will go back with you to your people' is preceded in the Targum by 'we will not go back to our people and our god (lit. 'fear')' perhaps because the **כ** which introduces the statement in the Hebrew text was thought to imply a contrast with something unstated in that text; the Peshitta makes Ruth and Orpah say 'We will go to your land and to your people', and the Targum adds to the end of their statement 'to become proselytes'. Twice in i 12 when Naomi mentions 'being with a man' the Targumist takes care to point out that she was referring to marriage, reading 'I am too old to be married to a man .... even if I were married to a man this night', and we may, perhaps, find here the same concern for sexual morality which we have above suggested is to be discerned in the Targumist's paraphrase of Ruth iii 9.

When 'Orpah kissed her mother-in-law' (i 14) the Septuagint adds 'and she returned to her people', while according to the Peshitta 'she turned and went away': both versions develop the pregnant usage of 'kissed' in the Hebrew. In the commentary of an anonymous Rabbi, which we have translated above, we find a

similar treatment in a comment which is perhaps to be attributed to Joseph Qara on account of its similarity in style to the one which follows it and which bears his name: to 'Orpah kissed her mother-in-law' is appended the comment 'in order to part from her and to go back to her home'. In the following verse, where Naomi advises Ruth "Go back after your sister-in-law", both the Septuagint and the Peshitta add 'you, too' after the imperative 'go back'; after 'sister-in-law' the Targum adds 'to your people and your gods' and so does Joseph Qara. In the Hebrew text the verb which introduces this statement had no subject apart from that which is represented by the inflection of the verb **והאמר**, but the Septuagint names Naomi as the subject as it does, too, in i 18; the Septuagint names Ruth as the subject of verbs in ii 14, 18, 19, iii 5, 16; Boaz in ii 14, iii 10, 14, iv 1, 2, 3; the Targum names Ruth in iii 7 and Boaz in iii 15, iv 8; the Peshitta names Ruth in ii 3 and Boaz in iii 10: in all of these places the subject of the verb (which is usually 'to say') is unstated in the Hebrew text. When 'she ceased speaking to her' (i 18) the Peshitta adds 'to turn back', obviously with the intention of pointing out to the reader that Naomi did not refuse to converse with Ruth but merely stopped appealing to her to remain in Moab, and when the two of them arrived in Bethlehem (i 19) it was 'all the inhabitants of the town' that they met, according to the Targum, and not, as in the Hebrew text, 'the whole town': the Targumist clearly saw here an opportunity for improving on the original and again in i 21, in keeping with his principles, he

explained the words 'empty' and 'full' by reading 'full of my husband and sons' and 'empty of them'.

To add, as the Peshitta does, 'her mother-in-law' after 'Naomi' in the phrase 'and Ruth said to Naomi' (ii 2) as though the reader needed to be informed of their relationship at this point in the story is plainly unnecessary and so this addition may be viewed as a manifestation of the Syriac translator's urge to expand the text at every opportunity; in the same verse he added the noun 'gleanings' after the verb 'I will glean' and he repeated this addition of the noun to the verb in ii 3, while the Targum added the object 'ears' to the verb glean in ii 8, 17 (and also, there, as object of 'she beat out').

When Boaz says to Ruth 'When you are thirsty .... drink' (ii 9) the Targum reads 'In the time that you are thirsty for water .... drink water', and it is not simply 'vinegar' in which, according to the Targum, Ruth is invited to dip her piece of bread (ii 14) but 'condiment prepared with vinegar'. On Ruth's return home from the barley-field when, according to the Hebrew account, 'she took out and gave (to her mother-in-law) what she had left over', the Targumist added a few details: according to him 'she took out from her sack and gave to her that food which she had left over'.

Again the Targum was not content to reproduce the phrase 'with whose young women you have been' (iii 2) without adding 'in the field', nor could he leave Naomi's instruction to Ruth 'Wash yourself and anoint yourself' (iii 3) without some additions; in the Targum these instructions read 'Wash yourself

with water and anoint yourself with perfume'. When 'Boaz went to lie down' (iii 7) the Peshitta inserts 'and when he was fast asleep' before continuing to say, with the Hebrew, 'she came quietly'. 'The gate' (iii 11) was, apparently, too vague a description for the Targumist for he adds '(of) the great Sanhedrin', and he would appear also to have felt the need for a subject for the verb 'if he will redeem you' (iii 13) for he provided one - 'the man for whom it is fitting to redeem you according to the Law'.

'Before one could recognize another' (iii 14) does not describe sufficiently accurately for the Syriac translator the time when Ruth arose after her night at the threshing-floor so he introduces his translation of the phrase with the addition 'at dawn, while it was yet dark'; the Targum also adds 'at dawn' after 'she arose' and, in case the reader should still miss the point, 'because of the darkness' after 'before one could recognize another'. In the same verse when Boaz says 'Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing-floor' he is not, according to the Hebrew text, speaking to anyone in particular so the Targum supplies the phrase 'to his servants' at the appropriate place. The Hebrew text then describes how Boaz, before letting Ruth go home, gave her 'six barley' ( שש שעורים ) (iii 15, 17) thus creating a splendid opportunity for the Targumist to insert 'seahs (of)' between the two words in his translation. When Naomi asks Ruth, on her return home, 'Who are you?' (iii 16), it is only in the Peshitta that she receives an answer; the Peshitta adds at this point 'and she said "I am Ruth"'. The

Targum qualifies Naomi's advice 'Stay, my daughter' (iii 18) with his insertion 'with me in the house'.

The Targumist's identification of the 'gate' as the Sanhedrin reappears in iv 1 where Boaz, according to the Targum, goes to the 'gate of the court of the Sanhedrin', and the phrase is repeated in iv 4 following 'those who sit'. A new element is introduced into the affair of Elimelech's field when Boaz says, in the Peshitta, "Naomi has sold to me ..." (iv 3) instead of the general statement of the Hebrew and other versions 'Naomi has sold'; the addition of 'to me' here is rather strange for the Peshitta's version of iv 5 still refers to the redeemer's buying the field direct from Naomi and nowhere else in the range of exegetical works which have been examined for this study does the idea appear that Boaz had acquired the field from Naomi before the legal transaction described in chapter iv.

To the description of how 'a man drew off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour' (iv 7) the Septuagint adds the qualification 'to the one who was redeeming his redemption', and when the redeemer says to Boaz 'Buy for yourself' (iv 8), the Septuagint adds 'my right of redemption'; then 'he drew off his shoe' and the Septuagint adds 'and gave it to him'. Again the Targum adds '(of the) Sanhedrin' to 'gate' in iv 10, 11, while in the latter verse the Peshitta adds 'of the town', and in the last verse of the book neither of these versions could leave the name of David standing alone; the Peshitta adds to it 'the king', the Targum 'the king of Israel'.

It is clear from these many examples that the translators of the Ancient Versions followed an exegetical policy of incorporating in their translations words or phrases without counterpart in the original Hebrew text but which seemed to them necessary to ensure the comprehension of the reader. We may find a similar policy practised by the mediaeval commentators who would sometimes expound a passage of the biblical text by repeating it, in their commentaries, in an amplified form. Some examples have already been cited above where the form of expansion used by the commentators coincided with similar expansion in the versions but we may note here a few further specimens from the commentaries. Ibn Ezra added the comment 'alone' to the phrase 'the woman was left' (i 5): he presumably understood the privative usage of **ל**, unlike the Targumist and Salmon ben Yeroham whose comments have been mentioned above. Rashi explained the phrase 'after him in whose eyes I find favour' (ii 2) thus: 'after whoever it is in whose eyes I find favour'. That this is an expansion rather than a paraphrase is clear from the Hebrew version of the comment - **אחר מי אשר אמצא הן בעיניו** - which differs from the biblical text only by its inclusion of the word **מי**. The purpose of this comment was, perhaps, to prevent the biblical text being misconstrued to mean 'after I have found favour in his eyes', the suffix presumably referring to Boaz whose name is mentioned in the preceding verse. Ibn Ezra mentions that some people had understood the phrase in this way but he properly opposes such an interpretation. If this view of the purpose of the comment is correct a similar purpose may



lie behind the Peshitta's similar version of this passage -  
'after the workers of him in whose eyes I find favour'.

Rashi again expands the overseer's report of Ruth's words  
(ii 7) thus (the words underlined representing Rashi's  
additions to the Massoretic text): "And she said in her heart  
Let me glean, I pray, the 'leget' of the ears and gather among  
the sheaves the 'shikhah' of the sheaves". "I am not as one  
of your maidservants" (ii 13) was expanded by Rashi and Qimhi  
to "I am not as important as one of your maidservants"; and  
by Salmon, ibn Ezra and the Anonymous Rabbi to "I am not  
worthy to be as one of your maidservants".

While dealing with the various ways in which material  
was added to the biblical story in the interests of exegesis  
we must also record the fact that elements which are present  
in the Massoretic text were occasionally omitted by the  
Ancient Versions. It is strange that the same versions which  
expanded the text of the narrative in the interests of clarity  
should have omitted to represent even apparently minor details  
yet this certainly did happen. It is possible, of course, that  
some, at least, of the omissions resulted either from the  
carelessness of a copyist or from a policy of free translation:  
the latter might explain why some material is not represented  
in the Peshitta which is, taken as a whole, a rather loose  
representation of the Hebrew text, but this can hardly apply to  
the Septuagint which is, on the whole, faithful to the Hebrew.  
It must be said here that there are places where the translator  
may be deemed technically to have omitted material although he  
was undoubtedly giving what he considered to be a suitable

(and, probably, faithful) translation. For example, the Hebrew text at ii 3 has the two verbs **וַחֲבֹא וַחֲלַךְ** - 'she went and came' - whereas the Septuagint reads **ἐπορεύθη** - 'she went' - and the Peshitta **וַאֲזַלַח** - 'she came'; both translators may therefore be judged to have one of the verbs but they doubtless found the Hebrew confusing and their translations are perfectly valid. Neither the Greek nor the Syriac version represents the negative in ii 13 and both read 'I will be' for the Hebrew 'I am (or 'will be') not'; it is possible that the translators construed the **אֵל** in the consonantal text as **אֵלִי** and thus what is technically an omission is explicable. But when the Septuagint omits the numeral 'two' at i 1, 8, and the Peshitta does likewise at i 1, 2, 8, it must seem that careless copying was the reason - for both versions add 'two' (to 'daughters-in-law') in i 6 - unless it be supposed that the numeral was missing at these points from the Hebrew text used by these translators and added subsequently in a manner similar to that which we have above found followed by the versions.

So far we have mentioned only one word omissions but there are also several phrases of the Hebrew text which are not represented in one version or another. The discovery that the Targum omits the complete sentence which forms the second half of i 7 - 'and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah' - is rather surprising since the Targum is faithful to the Hebrew with few variations and no other omissions; one can only suppose that a line in some manuscript was accidentally

skipped by some copyist. The omission by the Septuagint of the clause 'and it happened, when they came to Bethlehem' (i 19) is probably to be excused on account of its similarity to the preceding clause 'and the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem'. The Peshitta's omission of 'who was appointed over the reapers' from ii 6 is perhaps to be attributed to the proximity of the identical phrase in ii 5 and the translator may actually have considered the phrase 'where have you been working' (ii 19) to be redundant, coming as it does after 'where have you been gleaning today' - he didn't translate the former. Perhaps, too, he considered it unnecessary to translate 'her mother-in-law' after 'Naomi' in iii 1, but there is no apparent reason for his omission of 'how the matter will fall' (iii 18) and 'who returned from the field of Moab' (iv 3).

Mention must be made of that series of omissions which allow the inference that the book of Ruth suffered something of a systematic bowdlerization in the course of its transmission. The Peshitta appears to display an extreme reticence with regard to the female anatomy: 'my womb' (i 11) and 'she laid him on her breast' (iv 16) are omitted in that version.<sup>1</sup> The translators, both of the Septuagint and of the Peshitta, were apparently at some pains to remove any hint of indelicacy from the threshing-

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1. 'She laid him on her breast' is actually present in the Codex Ambrosianus though omitted from Lee's edition; it may still be suggested, however, that the phrase was suppressed in the Syriac tradition.

floor scene. When Naomi instructs Ruth to 'uncover' Boaz's feet and 'lie down', the Peshitta reads simply 'lie down at his feet'. When Ruth goes to carry out her mother-in-law's instructions the Septuagint omits from iii 7 the verbs 'he drank' and 'she lay down', which appear in the Hebrew and the Peshitta. It is already clear, however, from the Septuagint's version of iii 4 that Boaz will have been drinking and that Ruth is intended to lie down so no definite conclusions may be drawn from the omission of these verbs from this place, but the fact that the omitted words are potentially indelicate does prompt one to wonder whether they might have been suppressed deliberately. The Targumist dealt with the problem of the threshing-floor scene in a different way, by the inclusion of a long addition to the effect that Boaz 'restrained his desire and did not go near her': this kind of addition will be considered in the following section.

## B. HAGGADIC ADDITIONS TO THE STORY.

The longer additions to the narrative in the Targum, many of which contain material which is paralleled in other sources, must be distinguished from the kind of short additions described above, the inclusion of which may be justified in that their purpose is, like that of paraphrase, to bring out the meaning of the original text by presenting it in an amplified form. The kind of additional material which will be considered here represents a haggadic expansion which is frequently without basis in the original. Although these additions - and it is, of course, only in the Targum that they are actually incorporated in the text of the narrative - are frequently lengthy they are not necessarily so, for such brief notices as those of Josephus to the effect that Elimelech's affairs prospered in Moab, that Boaz received Ruth and Naomi hospitably on their arrival in Bethlehem, and that it was about midday that Boaz went to the city gate, must be considered under this heading.

The legitimacy of these remarks of Josephus as exegesis may certainly be called in question. While it is true that the biblical account gives no direct indication of the time of Boaz's visit to the city gate it may convey the impression that it took place somewhat earlier than midday; that Boaz, in fact, set out shortly after Ruth had departed from the threshing-floor. By all appearances Boaz's first meeting with Ruth was that which is described in the second chapter of the book so he could hardly have 'received' her and Naomi on their arrival, whether hospitably or not. As for Elimelech's possible prosperity in

Moab, again the text is silent: the fact that his family was able to remain there for some ten years after his death might suggest that they had some degree of security but they can hardly have prospered greatly if Naomi returned to Judah in poverty. Josephus's comments are merely bits of narrative embroidery woven into his free rendering of the biblical story.

Much of the haggadic material originated in attempts to answer questions which might arise from the narrative, questions such as could not have been anticipated by the author and which, consequently, go unanswered in his story. For example, one might well wonder at the extent of the misfortunes which befell the family of Elimelech in the sudden and untimely deaths of all its male members, and one might ask why such things should have happened. To the scientific mind this is hardly a legitimate question, for mention of the menfolk and their deaths is a literary device designed to introduce the widows with whom the story is concerned, but to the Rabbinic mind it seemed that such a calamity could only have befallen the family as the penalty for their sins. The sin for which Elimelech was punished by death had to be his emigration to Moab, since we know of nothing else that he did, but why should emigration be a sin? The haggadists came to the conclusion that Elimelech was a wealthy man who was not directly affected by the famine and he emigrated solely out of selfishness, in order to evade the duty of helping the poor who were suffering from the famine.<sup>1</sup> This view found expression in several places

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1. B.B. 91a; Ruth R. I 4; Ruth Z. on i 1, 20; Rashi.

but it was not unanimous: R. Hiyya b. Aba, speaking in the name of R. Joshua b. Korhah, dissented on the basis of his belief that Elimelech would not have gone to Moab unless he had been forced to do so by the famine. His opinion was that the death penalty was imposed on Elimelech because he did not entreat God's mercy for the unfortunate people of Judah.<sup>1</sup> In any event the famine could not have been a serious one since Elimelech was punished for emigrating;<sup>2</sup> the fact that what had been the premise in the first place was now the conclusion and vice versa was apparently not considered important, and so the haggadah developed.

In B.B. 91a the death of Mahlon and Chilion is, like Elimelech's, seen as their punishment for leaving Palestine without any real necessity and a connection between the deaths of father and sons is also made in Ruth Rabbah, where the haggadic process was carried a stage further. It was deduced from the story of Job and from the plagues in Exodus that "the Merciful One never exacts retribution of man's life to begin with" and so it was concluded that, in the case of Mahlon and Chilion, "first of all their horses, their asses and their camels died, then Elimelech and lastly the two sons".<sup>3</sup> Rashi has a variant of this: "At first they suffered the loss

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1. B.B. 91b.
  2. Ruth R. I 4.
  3. Ruth R. II 10.

of their wealth and their camels and their cattle died and afterwards they also died".

But another explanation for the sudden deaths of Mahlon and Chilion was, as the Targumist found, readily available: "they married Moabite women" (Ruth i 4) or, to use the Targumist's words, "they transgressed against the decree of the word of the Lord and they took for themselves foreign wives from the daughters of Moab ... and because they transgressed against the decree of the word of the Lord and contracted affinity with foreign peoples their days were cut off and both Mahlon and Chilion also died in the polluted land". Ruth Rabbah explains more precisely: "They neither proselytized them (the wives) nor gave them ritual immersion nor had the new law 'Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabitess' been propounded, that they should escape punishment on its account".<sup>1</sup>

The significance of the phrase 'Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabitess' is that the law of Deut. xxiii 4 - 'An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not come into the assembly of Yahweh' - should be understood to apply only to the male members of those nations for indeed the text says 'Ammonite' and 'Moabite' but it does not say 'Ammonitess' and 'Moabitess'. This interpretation of the Deuteronomic law was necessitated by the need to explain how Ruth came to be accepted in Israel despite her Moabite nationality. The fact that Boaz was able to marry

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1. Ruth R. II 10.



Ruth with impunity while Mahlon and Chilion had been punished by death for marrying Ruth and Orpah forced the Rabbis to the conclusion that originally the Mosaic law of Deut. xxiii 4 had applied to Ammonites and Moabites of both sexes - and so Mahlon and Chilion were punished for breaking it - but that it had been revised to apply only to males in the period between the death of Mahlon and Chilion and Ruth's reception into Israel and her marriage to Boaz. Thus Ruth Rabbah, as quoted above, refers to 'the new law'. In the Targum the promulgation of this new law was attributed to Boaz himself: in reply to Ruth's question "How is this that I have found favour in your eyes, that you should take notice of me when I am from a foreign people, from the daughters of Moab, and from a people who are not clean to enter the congregation of the Lord?" (ii 10), Boaz says "It has surely been announced to me by the word of the wise that, when the Lord so decreed, he did not decree it concerning females but concerning males" (ii 11).

It must remain a mystery why it was not seen that Ezra ix. must speak against this view that, after the time of Boaz, the law of Deut. xxiii 4 applied only to males. Thus, ibn Ezra's assertion that "Moabites were permitted (in marriage) to Israel, for the scripture only forbade that Ammonites and Moabites should come into the congregation and that they should marry the daughters of Israel" is not, in view of the above discussion, odd, but it is strange to find this assertion followed by the promise that "in the book of Ezra I will explain

this properly".<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, it seems he never wrote a commentary on Ezra (or, at least, if he did it is no longer extant)<sup>2</sup> so we cannot tell how he hoped to achieve this.

The view on which this complicated exegesis of the death of Mahlon and Chilion and the reception of Ruth into Judaism - the belief that Ruth and Orpah remained unconverted heathens after their marriage - was opposed by ibn Ezra on the sound logical ground that Orpah could not have "gone back .... to her gods" (i 15) if she had not previously been converted to Judaism. Ibn Ezra makes this point twice in his commentary - at i 2, 15 - and he was supported by Qimhi who commented, on the phrase 'Moabite women' (i 4), 'They had been converted'. Joseph Qara, likewise, thought that it might be learnt from the statement 'your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods' that 'they had been converted to Judais when they were married to Mahlon and Chilion, for the expression 'has gone back' can only mean that the woman who had been converted has now gone back to her former state, to her people and her gods'.

These scholars lived in a comparatively scientific age: in the midrashic period the view was, as it seems, universally held, that Ruth's conversion to Judaism took place only after Orpah had turned back. On the basis of Ruth's central statement

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1. Ibn Ezra on Ruth i 2.
  2. See above p.47.

- "Your people is my people and your god my god" - in the speech in which she declared her intention to accompany Naomi (i 16f), the Rabbis viewed the whole speech as Ruth's declaration of her conversion and, consequently, expanded it into a catechism of proelytism in which each phrase of Ruth's speech was taken to indicate her acknowledgement and acceptance of some condition or consequence of her conversion which had been described, as it were, 'between the lines' of the biblical text, by Naomi. The catechism which resulted from this process appears in slightly varying forms in Rashi's commentary, the Talmud (Yebamoth 47b), the Targum, Ruth Rabbah II 22-24 and Ruth Zuta, and the variations between these documents are interesting from the point of view of the study of the development of the exegetical tradition. It has been shown above<sup>1</sup> that Rashi was dependent principally on the Talmud for his version and that he probably also used Ruth Rabbah. It also emerges from a comparative study of the five documents that the material in Ruth Rabbah stems from a tradition independent of the Targum and Talmud, which are in agreement for the most part and appear to represent the same tradition; the version of the midrash Ruth Zuta is also similar to that of the Talmud.

Ruth's promise "Where you go, I will go" is, in the Talmud, Targum, Zuta and Rashi, an acceptance of the limit imposed on journeys on the Sabbath, the only difference being - apart from

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1. P. 38f.

the language which is Aramaic in the case of the Targum and Hebrew in the other documents - that the Targum and Zuta both mention the actual distance permitted - 'two thousand cubits' - and the Targum also extends the rule to holy days as well as Sabbaths; in Ruth Rabbah the same sentence is interpreted as Ruth's acknowledgement of Naomi's advice that "it is not the custom of daughters of Israel to frequent Gentile theatres and circuses". Satisfied with Ruth's response Naomi is supposed then to have continued with her catechizing but there are several different versions of her second statement: the Talmud, Zuta and Rashi have her point out that it is prohibited for two people of different sexes to be alone together unless they are married, the Targum that Jews are forbidden to lodge with Gentiles and Ruth Rabbah that 'it is not the custom of daughters of Israel to dwell in a house which has no mezuzah'; in each case Ruth replied "Where you lodge, I will lodge".

As for "Your people are my people", in the Talmud, the Targum and Rashi this is Ruth's reply to Naomi's information that the Jews must observe six hundred and thirteen precepts, the Targum expanding Ruth's words to read "What your people keep I myself will keep as if they had been my people from before this"; Ruth Rabbah makes Ruth's words refer to 'the penalties and admonitions (of the Torah)' while Ruth Zuta shows a streak of originality by supposing Naomi to have said "Incest is forbidden to us". "Your God is my God", according to the Talmud, the Targum, Zuta and Rashi, is an abjuration of idolatry; according to Ruth Rabbah it refers to 'the other commandments of the bible'.

Ruth Rabbah also has alternative explanations of these first four phrases of Ruth's declaration. These alternative views are cast in the form of exegeses of what Ruth actually says and according to them "Where you go I will go" indicates that Ruth undertook to attend the sanctuaries - the Ohel Mo'ed, Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon and the Permanent Temple; "Where you lodge I will lodge" means "I will lodge overnight with the sacrifices"; "your people will be my people in that I will destroy all idolatry within me" and "Your God shall be my God to pay me the reward of my labour".

All our documents agree that **בְּאִשֶּׁר תָּמוּתָּ** (i 17) should be understood as 'By whatever means you die', for all interpret it as Ruth's acknowledgement of Naomi's instruction that Jewish law prescribed four kinds of capital punishment, the Targum and Ruth Rabbah listing the four forms of death penalty as 'stoning, burning, decapitation and strangling'.<sup>1</sup> "And there I will be buried" is, in the Targum, a reply to Naomi's statement "We have a house of burial"; in Ruth Rabbah, Ruth Zuta, the Talmud and Rashi "There are two graves prepared by the court", Ruth Rabbah and Rashi adding that these are "one for those who have been stoned and burnt and one for those decapitated and strangled".

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1. So Ruth Rabbah: the Targum, for the last, has 'hanging upon wood'.

If we may return, for a moment, to an earlier stage in the story we find an obvious question for the Haggadah to answer in the statement "She heard in the field of Moab that Yahweh had visited his people to give them bread" (i 6). Now, how exactly did Naomi come to hear this? The haggadah provides two alternative answers: the Targum reads, instead of 'she heard', 'it was announced in the field of Moab by the mouth of the angel', while Ruth Rabbah II 11 explains more prosaically, though perhaps more plausibly, 'she heard from pedlars making their rounds from city to city'. For anyone who wondered why the famine should suddenly have ended the Targumist added to the end of that verse 'on account of the merit of Abzan the judge and his prayers which he prayed before the Lord, (that is Boaz the Pious)'.

According to Ruth Rabbah II 12 Naomi and her daughters-in-law left Moab barefoot - the bible says 'They walked on the road' (i 7). A similarly literal mind must have asked, with reference to the 'kindness which you have shown to the dead' (i 8) "how can kindness be shown to a dead man?" for Ruth Rabbah II 14 provides the information that Ruth and Orpah had attended to the provision of shrouds for Mahlon and Chilion - presumably this is the only thing a woman could do for a dead man.

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem they found the town crowded because, according to the Targum, it was the day of the ceremonial reaping of the Omer - the sheaf of barley, from the beginning of the harvest, which was brought to the Temple for a wave-offering (Lev. xxiii 10f.). This is also mentioned

in Ruth Rabbah along with two other possible reasons: either it was the wedding-day of one of the daughters of the judge Ibzan (he had thirty), or it was the funeral of Boaz's wife. The view that Boaz's wife died on the very day that Ruth arrived in Bethlehem is found in B.B. 91a, Ruth R. III 6, Rashi on i 19.

There were forty-two reapers working in Boaz's field (Ruth R. IV 6): this is deduced from the fact that he had one overseer whereas Solomon is said to have appointed 3,600 overseers over 150,000 workers (II Chr. ii 16f). Because the text says 'she gleaned until evening' (ii 17) it is to be inferred, according to the midrash Zuta, that Boaz's servants had taken care of threshing and collecting together the grain which she had gleaned. The obstacle to this inference, however, which the midrashist apparently overlooked, is that we are told in the same verse that 'she beat out what she had gleaned'; perhaps we are to suppose that this refers only to the last bit of grain that she gleaned. On her return home Ruth presents to Naomi the food which she had left over from the meal which is described earlier, while Naomi, according to Josephus, presented to Ruth food which she had saved from some that had been given to her by neighbours. On hearing Ruth's story Naomi pronounced a blessing on Boaz for his kindness "to the living and the dead" (ii 20), which raises anew the question which had been asked earlier with respect to the kindness shown by Ruth and Orpah to "the dead" (i 8). Ruth Rabbah V 10 explains that Boaz "fed and sustained the living" and "occupied himself" with shrouds for

the dead - there really is a limit to the number of good deeds that can be done for a corpse. Rabinowitz explains the expression "occupied himself" as meaning he paid for the shrouds, but the question as to how Boaz might have paid for the shrouds which were made by Ruth and Orpah, presumably in Moab, was not asked. Rashi has a similar explanation of Boaz's kindness but his version says "needs" instead of "shrouds" - that is, the ritual washing of the body, closing the eyes and mouth, provision of shrouds and, finally, burial.

A literal interpretation of Ruth iii 6 - 'And she went down to the threshing-floor and did everything as her mother-in-law had instructed her' - led the Rabbis to the conclusion that Ruth must have washed, perfumed and dressed herself after her arrival at the threshing-floor, for the instructions 'uncover his feet and lie down' were not carried out until verse 7 and therefore the instructions referred to in verse 6 must be those about washing, perfuming and dressing. A reason for Ruth's reversal of the order suggested by Naomi ('Wash etc. .... and go down') was soon found: according to R. Eleazar Ruth thought that, if she were to appear in public dressed up in the manner advised by Naomi, she might be mistaken for a prostitute and molested on the way.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Shab. 113b; similarly Rashi.



The reason why Boaz slept at the threshing-floor was 'found' in Hosea ix 1 - "Thou hast loved a harlot's hire upon every threshing-floor". Boaz slept there to prevent his threshing-floor being used for immoral purposes.<sup>1</sup> According to Rashi "theft and robbery were rife among that generation and he slept in his granary to protect his granary". The reason why Ruth was to go to the threshing-floor was, according to our anonymous Rabbi, that it would have caused suspicion if she had visited him at his home; Salmon ben Yeroḥam, turning aside from the main point, suggested that Ruth went to confront Boaz herself rather than entrust her business to an agent; according to Josephus, Naomi sent Ruth to the threshing-floor because she thought that Boaz "would be gracious to them after consorting with the child". The fact that Ruth's visit to Boaz involved the contravention of the rule, expressed by Naomi in the catechism which is built up around Ruth's declaration of i 16f., that a man and a woman should not be alone together unless they are married, does not seem to have been considered except by the author of the haggadic document which Hartmann cites as the 'Handschrift aus Jemen': in this it is explained that it was permissible for Ruth to be alone with Boaz on this occasion in order that through him, a President of the Court, she might be received into Judaism, which

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1. Ruth R. V 15.

had not yet happened.<sup>1</sup>

The Rabbis clearly felt that the scene at the threshing-floor, in which Ruth and Boaz spend the night together, needed a careful exegesis lest the reader might conclude that they might actually have engaged in sexual intercourse.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested above that the treatment of this passage in the ancient versions was motivated by this consideration; the haggadists were determined to leave no room for doubt. To begin with, Boaz was 'in good heart' (iii 7) not just because he had eaten and drunk, but because he had recited grace after his meal, he had eaten sweet things, he was busy studying the Torah and he was looking for a wife.<sup>3</sup> If the relevance of the last statement to his good spirits is not immediately obvious, it should be remembered that 'he who finds a wife finds a good thing' (Prov. xviii 22): this does nothing to help the connection but some Rabbi presumably thought it did. The Targum explains that, after eating and drinking, Boaz "blessed the name of the Lord who had received his prayers and withdrawn the famine from the land of Israel", before he lay down to sleep.

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1. D. Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth in der Midrasch-Literatur, (Leipzig 1901) p.57.
  2. Such attitudes to this passage are not confined to the period with which this study is concerned; we may mention, for example, the modern haggadah of H. Gunkel, Reden und Aufsätze, (Göttingen, 1913) p.78, that Boaz allowed Ruth to spend the night with him solely in order to protect her from possible molestation on her way home.
  3. Ruth R. V 15.

When he woke up to find "a woman lying at his feet" (iii 8), the Targum adds "and he restrained his desire and did not go near her, even as did Joseph the Righteous, who refused to go near the Egyptian woman, his master's wife, and even as did Paltiel the Pious, the son of Laish, who placed a sword between himself and Michal daughter of Saul, David's wife, and refused to go near her".

At this point a brief excursus on the subject of Paltiel and his sword may be in order. During David's outlaw period Saul gave Michal in marriage to 'Palti ben Laish' (I Sam. xxv 44); on David's rise to power he demanded the return of Michal and she was taken away from 'Paltiel ben Laish' who followed her, weeping, until Abner sent him about his business (II Sam. iii 15). It would seem that rather than countenance what could only be adultery on the part of Michal the Rabbis came up with this story: they had slept with a sword between them and it was for this meritorious action, according to R. Johanan, that 'Palti' acquired the suffix 'el' for his name.<sup>1</sup> The idea of the use of a sword (or other sharp instrument) to keep a man and a woman apart while they slept together is widespread in folklore. The most famous example - that of Tristan and Isolt - represents, perhaps, 'a fossil of Celtic tradition',<sup>2</sup> but the same motif

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1. San. 19b.

2. G. Schoepperle, Tristan and Isolt; a study of the sources of the romance, (New York, 1913) vol. II, p.430.

appears in stories from many European and Oriental cultures. The Talmudic story of Paltiel and Michal, which is attributed to R. Johanan - identified in the Soncino Talmud as Johanan bar Nappaha who lived in the second or third century - is the most ancient to which a date may be assigned.<sup>1</sup> Boaz is compared to Joseph and Paltiel ben Laish also in the midrash Zuta on Ruth iii 13. R. Johanan arranged the three heroes in ascending order of merit thus: Joseph, who had to endure temptation on only one occasion; Boaz who resisted temptation for a whole night; Paltiel, who resisted temptation for many nights.<sup>2</sup>

Returning, then, to Boaz at the threshing-floor we find him spending the night stretched out on his face praying that no-one might know that the woman had come to the threshing-floor:<sup>3</sup> we find, too, that 'All that night his Evil Inclination contended with him saying "You are unmarried and seek a wife, and she is unmarried and seeks a husband. Arise and have intercourse with her and make her your wife". And he took an oath to his Evil Inclination saying, "As the Lord liveth I will not touch her"'.<sup>4</sup> According to Josephus Boaz bade Ruth, at daybreak, to 'take as much of the barley as she could carry and be off to her mother-in-law before anyone should see that she had slept there, since

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1. B. Haller, "L'épée symbole et gardienne de chasteté", Romania 36 (1907), pp. 36-49.
  2. San. 19b, 20a.
  3. Ruth R. VII 1.
  4. *ibid* VI 4.

it was wise to guard against scandal of that kind and the more so when nothing had passed'.

As well as the problem of removing any possible indelicacy from this scene the haggadah found other questions arising from the same passage and provided answers for them. Why was Boaz frightened and how did he know it was a woman that was lying at his feet? According to Rashi he thought it was a demon but discovered that it was a woman when he put his hand on her head. Ibn Ezra thought it possible that Ruth might have said "Don't be afraid" and a woman's voice is always recognizable. Again, there might have been a bright moon and Boaz would have been able to see that she had no beard or, indeed, to observe that she was dressed as a woman. Salmon ben Yeroham thought it would have been her clothes and her perfume that identified Ruth as a woman. According to the biblical text Boaz said 'Who are you?' and Ruth replied 'I am Ruth': according to Ruth Rabbah there was more to this conversation and it went like this -

Boaz: "Who are you, a woman or a spirit?"

Ruth: "A woman".

Boaz: "Unmarried or married?"

Ruth: "Unmarried".

Boaz: "Unclean or clean?"

Ruth: "Clean".<sup>1</sup> (Then, presumably, she added "I am Ruth").

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1. Ruth R. VI 1.

One of the more scientific questions which the haggadists tried to answer relates to the quantity of grain which Boaz gave to Ruth on the morning after the episode at the threshing-floor. The biblical text says, literally, "six of barley" (iii 15) and the debate as to what unit of measure should be understood has continued into modern times. Keil and Delitzsch<sup>1</sup> have suggested that it can hardly have been six seahs - it would have been impossible for a woman to carry this quantity; Bertholet<sup>2</sup> and Nowack<sup>3</sup> agreed with this opinion and thought six omers more likely. Joüon<sup>4</sup> and Rudolph<sup>5</sup> opposed this on the ground that **שֵׁה**, being a masculine noun, is grammatically impossible after **וְ**, Joüon adding that, if 'omers' was intended, Ruth would have received less from Boaz than she had carried on the day before (6 Omers = 6/10ths Ephah); they considered six seahs to be a not unbearable burden for a strong peasant woman and Hertzberg<sup>6</sup> agreed with this, observing that he had seen it done in Palestine. Gerleman,<sup>7</sup> however, objects to the idea of six seahs on the ground that this would be too much

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1. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, (Edinburgh, 1872) p.486.
  2. A. Bertholet, "Das Buch Ruth", KHAT XVII (1898) p.65.
  3. W. Nowack, "Richter, Ruth und Bücher Samuel8s", HKAT I 4 (1902) p.196.
  4. P. Joüon, Ruth, Commentaire philologique et étymologique, (Rome, 1953) p.78.
  5. W. Rudolph, "Das Buch Ruth", KAT XVII, 1 (Gütersloh, 1962) p.56.
  6. H.W. Hertzberg, "Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth", ATD 9 (Göttingen, 1959) p.277.
  7. G. Gerleman, "Ruth", BK XVIII 2 (Neukirchen, 1965) p.33.

to be carried in a **מספחה** (Ruth iii 15); he prefers omers despite Rudolph's objection.

In the period with which the present study is concerned the possibility that the unit of measure may have been the omer does not seem to have been considered and discussion centred around the choice between 'seahs' and 'grains'. The Peshitta, perhaps playing for safety, has 'six measures', but the Targum has 'seahs'. The real problem was, perhaps, that neither 'seahs' nor 'grains' seemed suitable - the former would be a considerable burden, the latter an insignificant amount. In Ruth R. VII 2, San. 93ab and Rashi there is agreement that six seahs would be too much for a woman to carry and so the conclusion was reached that the reference must be to six particular grains, though Boaz probably gave her more as well. The Targum, in support of its interpretation 'six seahs', adds to its text 'and strength came to her from before the Lord to bear them'.

All are agreed, however, on the prophetic significance of the number six - Ruth was to be the ancestress of six men who would each be blessed with six blessings - though there is no unanimity on the identity of the six men. In the Targum and the Talmud they are said to be David, Daniel and his three companions (specified individually by name in the Talmud) and the Messiah; in Ruth Rabbah the three companions of Daniel are counted as one and Hezekiah and Josiah are added to the list as well. A list of six blessings for each is also included there. Rashi refers to one descendant only, presumably the Messiah, though he does not say so, for the blessings he mentions - 'the spirit of wisdom and

discernment, counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord' - are, in Ruth Rabbah, those ascribed to the Messiah. The Messianic interpretation of the quotation from Isaiah xi 2 was, presumably, so well established in Rashi's time that he did not find it necessary to identify Ruth's descendant explicitly.

Another place where the haggadists gave a scientific, though incorrect, answer to a scientific question is the shoe-removing ceremony in iv 8, where the verb 'he drew off' stands, in the Hebrew bible, without a specified subject, so the question inevitably arose "Who took off whose shoe?" or "Who gave the shoe to whom?" According to Ruth Rabbah VII 12, Rab said Boaz gave it to the redeemer, Levi said the redeemer gave it to Boaz and the majority apparently sided with Rab; in the midrash Zuta the debate is between Rab ('the buyer' i.e. Boaz) and Samuel ('the seller' i.e. the redeemer). In the Talmud (B.M. 47a) it is R. Judah who thinks the redeemer gave his shoe to Boaz but the majority was apparently against him. Rashi sat on the fence saying "Our teachers are divided .... some say .... others say ....". Qimhi and our anonymous Rabbi both held to the view, on the basis of which the majority of the earlier Rabbis had concluded that it was Boaz who gave his shoe to the redeemer, that the act of handing over the shoe was symbolic of ratification of a purchase and that it was the purchaser who made the symbolic payment. Ibn Ezra, too, favoured the traditional majority view that Boaz gave his shoe to the redeemer, although he also quotes the alternative opinion, and adds the 'explanation' that it was more



practical for a man to hand over his shoe than his shirt or his trousers.

Salmon ben Yeroham took the view that it was the redeemer who handed his shoe to Boaz and, in the opinion of the present writer, this view is correct. The idea that Boaz gave his shoe to the redeemer in token payment cannot be upheld from the biblical account, for Boaz bought nothing from the redeemer. The text informs us that the shoe-ceremony was a kind of attestation: the shoe should be regarded as a symbol of the redeemer's interest in Elimelech's field, and its surrender to Boaz as a symbol of his renunciation of that interest.

In the Targum it is Boaz who took off the shoe (or glove?)<sup>1</sup> and it is possible that the intention was to say that Boaz took off the redeemer's shoe. This is apparently Saarisalo's understanding of the Targum text and, if it is correct, the Targumist may have confused the ceremony with that which is described in Deut. xxv 9 where it is prescribed that, if a man

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1. The word is קִרְיָן (from Greek *βάθηξ*), which Jastrow explains as 'casket, coffer', but for this reference he says 'sleeve'. Wright also gives the meaning 'casket, coffer', but in this instance he says 'glove', commenting "The Targumist has accommodated the story of the transaction to the customs of the middle ages. Or is it possible that קִרְיָן means a shoe as well as a glove?" Saarisalo translates the word as 'shoe'. The connection between 'casket' and 'glove' or 'sleeve' or even 'shoe' is not immediately apparent, but it is interesting to note that the Peshitta's word for 'shoe' in this passage is מְסָנָא which differs only slightly from מְסָנָא - 'basket'.

refused to marry his brother's widow, the widow should remove his shoe; that is to say, the Targumist may have intended to suggest that Boaz here acted on behalf of Ruth in removing the shoe of her defaulting kinsman. However, it is by no means certain that this was the Targumist's intention and Hartmann's reading - "Boaz drew off his right-hand glove and ratified the purchase" - is probably to be preferred to Saarisalo's. In this case, with Boaz taking off his own shoe (or glove), the Targum is in agreement with the opinion of Rab and the majority.

According to Josephus, Ruth, who was present throughout the discussion at the gate, was bidden by Boaz to "loosen the man's shoe, approaching him as the law ordained, and to spit in his face". This is clearly a reference to Deut. xxv, and the two ceremonies were obviously confused by Josephus. In a footnote to his translation of this passage in Josephus, Thackeray observes that the book of Ruth "describes a different ceremony, the giving of his shoe by the purchaser to the seller as a symbol of exchange". Thus, the traditional Rabbinic view of the middle ages and earlier still survives.

Finally we may mention the question which arose from the redeemer's refusal to redeem Elimelech's field: why did he suddenly change his mind with the plea "lest I destroy my inheritance"? Our anonymous Rabbi explained this statement as meaning that the redeemer could not afford to redeem Elimelech's field unless he first sold his own property, though he also opined (under 'Like Rachel and Leah' iv 11) that the redeemer's real reason was that it was beneath his dignity to marry Ruth. The idea

that it was to marrying Ruth rather than to redeeming the field that the redeemer objected was, it seems, universally held. After 'I cannot redeem for myself' (iv 6) the Targum adds 'because I have a wife; I have not the power to marry another in addition to her lest there be contention in my house and I destroy my inheritance'. Rashi explained that the redeemer did not want to marry Ruth because of the law of Deut. xxiii 4 - and in Ruth Rabbah VII 7 it is explained that he was afraid of meeting the same fate as Mahlon and Chilion - but he did not know the new law 'Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabitess'. Qimhi also thought the redeemer was already married and that the substance of his objection was that he did not want to have two women in his house fighting with each other. Salmon offered three suggestions, all of them based on the assumption that it was marriage to Ruth which presented difficulty to the redeemer: either he had already divided his estate amongst his sons and would therefore have nothing to give to his sons by Ruth unless he destroyed his earlier arrangements, or he could not afford to keep Ruth without sacrificing some of his property, or his previous wife would create trouble if he married a second wife.

In more recent times haggadoth not dissimilar to these have been created to answer the same question: we may mention Beyer's suggestion that the significance of the redeemer's reference to destroying his inheritance (iv 6) is that his estate would have to be divided among the children he would have by Ruth, if he married her, as well as among those he had already,<sup>1</sup> and

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1. J. Beyer, "The Ge'ullah in the Book of Ruth", AJSL XIX (1902-3) p.148 n.9.

Rowley's assumption that the redeemer was 'a married man with a family of his own'<sup>1</sup> while Boaz was probably childless.<sup>2</sup> These haggadoth, like their ancient counterparts, are based on the assumption that the right to redeem Elimelech's field carried with it an obligation to marry Ruth which, in turn, rests on the assumption that the Qere קָנִיָּה in Ruth iv 5 is to be preferred to the Kethibh קָנִיָּה . The present writer has suggested elsewhere<sup>3</sup> that the Kethibh gives the only satisfactory sense in that verse but discussion of this matter is out of place in the present context. It must be mentioned, however, that R. Samuel b. Nahman acknowledged the existence of the kethibh and explained it as indicating that Boaz knew that the redeemer would refuse and that he himself would marry Ruth:<sup>4</sup> why it was never taken at its face value must remain a mystery.

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1. H.H. Rowley, "The Marriage of Ruth", HTR XL (1947) p.92.
  2. *ibid* p.97.
  3. D.R.G. Beattie, "Kethibh and Qere in Ruth iv 5", VT XXI (1971) pp.490-494.
  4. Ruth R. VII 10.

C. HAGGADIC TREATMENT OF THE CHARACTERS  
IN THE STORY.

As well as attempting to provide answers, in the manner described above, for various questions which were felt to arise from the story of Ruth, the haggadic literature devoted some attention to the personalities of the characters who appear in it. The personality of the characters was often derived from their names and so we may find, in several cases, that the early Rabbis were in fact attempting to expound the meaning of these names: this was done with varying degrees of philological accuracy.

Elimelech's name was interpreted as showing that he had aspirations to kingship: 'He used to say "To me shall kingship come"'.<sup>1</sup> It would appear that the first part of the name was construed as the preposition **אל** 'to' with the pronominal suffix of the first person singular, but such an interpretation is, of course, purely midrashic. If **אלי** were to be understood as 'to me', the name would suggest its bearer was a loyal vassal rather than a pretender to the throne. He was an important man,<sup>2</sup> a wealthy nobleman<sup>3</sup> and one of the leading men of Judah:<sup>4</sup> while the Hebrew text describes him only as **איש** - 'a man' (i l), the Targum calls him **גברא רבא** - 'a nobleman'. When the members

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1. Ruth R. II 5.

2. Ruth R. I 4, Salmon ben Yeroham on i 2.

3. Rashi.

4. Rashi, Joseph Qara.

of his family, as a group, are called 'Ephrathites' (i 2), the Targum adds 'Lords' and when they settled in Moab the Targum informs us that they became governors.<sup>1</sup>

We have already referred<sup>2</sup> to Elimelech's presumed selfishness, for which he was condemned to death and to the alternative view that he was punished for neglecting his duty as a judge to entreat God's mercy on behalf of the people. The Rabbis had little more to say about him but, for one who occupies so little space in the story, he might seem already to have attracted a disproportionate quantity of haggadah. According to 'the Rabbis' he was a brother of Boaz and the redeemer - that is to say, they followed the literal reading of Ruth iv 3 where Boaz refers to 'our brother Elimelech' - but R. Joshua b. Levi took the view that it was Boaz's father Salmon who was a brother of Elimelech and the redeemer.<sup>3</sup> The latter view was one of several put forward to explain how the redeemer took precedence over Boaz in the matter of Elimelech's field; the others will be discussed presently.

The Septuagint and Josephus use the name Abimelech instead of Elimelech, but this is probably of little significance. The opinion has been expressed above that this originated in error and, indeed, the name 'Abimelech' occurs twice in the Codex Ambrosianus (ii 1, 3) and twice in the commentary of the anonymous

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1. Reading **והיו חמץ רופילין** for MT **ויהיו שם** (i 2).

2. Above p. 216f.

3. Ruth R. VI 3.

Rabbi (at iv 4, 5), where it is undoubtedly an accidental corruption.

Naomi was so-called because her actions were pleasant and sweet:<sup>1</sup> this may be viewed as a midrashic statement of what ibn Ezra expressed more scientifically in his comment " נעים is something pleasant .... when applied to food (it) is sweetness".<sup>2</sup> She was a woman of noble character who, by her advice and example had led Ruth to the way of virtue and modesty.<sup>3</sup> As the wife of a rich and distinguished man, Naomi was accustomed to ride in litters, splendidly attired and well-fed, and attended by maids mounted on camels. This is why the townswomen did not recognize her when she returned from Moab, emaciated, barefoot and in rags, and that is why they said "Is this Naomi?"<sup>4</sup>

The character of Mahlon and Chilion, as well as their fate, was deduced from their names. They were identified with Joash and Saraph (I Chr. iv 22) of whom it is said **בעלו למאב**, which was understood to mean 'they married into Moab'. Rab said their names were Mahlon and Chilion but they were also called Joash and Saraph because they lost hope ( **יאש** ) in Messianic redemption and were condemned to be burnt ( **שרף** ). R. Samuel said their names were Joash and Saraph but they were called Mahlon and

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1. Ruth R. II 5.
  2. Ibn Ezra on i 20.
  3. Ruth R. IV 6.
  4. ibid III 6, Ruth Z., Rashi.

Chilion because they defiled themselves ( חלל ) and were condemned to destruction ( כליון ).<sup>1</sup> An alternative view is that they were called Joash and Saraph because they left Israel in despair ( נהיאשו ) and burned ( שרפו ) the Torah. It was not necessary to take the latter element literally, for R. Menahema, speaking in the name of R. Aha, explained that "Whoever ignores one word of the Torah is regarded as though he had burnt it".<sup>2</sup> They were also called Mahlon and Chilion because they were blotted out ( נמחו ) and perished ( כלו ) from the world.<sup>3</sup> According to R. Johanan, Mahlon's name referred to the pardon ( מחילה ) granted to him by God, in that Ruth, who 'recoiled from sin', married him; Chilion's name is still referred by him to destruction ( כלייה ).<sup>4</sup>

Ruth, as well as being treated as a model proselyte, was held up by the Rabbis as a perfect example of loyalty, modesty and integrity, and it was these qualities which Boaz found praiseworthy in her. Already in the biblical text he comments on her loyalty to Naomi (ii 11); in the Targum he tells Ruth, after explaining to her that the law of Deut. xxiii 4 does not apply to females, that "it has been told to me by prophecy that hereafter kings and prophets shall descend from you on account

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1. B.B. 91b. 2?
  2. Ruth R. II 4.
  3. ibid II 5.
  4. Ruth Z. on i 2.



of your goodness which you have done for your mother-in-law, in that you sustained her after your husband's death and that you forsook your gods and your people, your father and your mother and the land of your birth and went to be a proselyte and to dwell among a people who were not known to you in former times". The idea that Ruth was to be rewarded for her goodness to Naomi is also expanded in the Targum and we learn there that she was to be free from the judgement of Gehenna and that her portion would be with Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel and Leah (i 12).

According to the midrashic literature it was Ruth's modest behaviour and her honesty in gleaning that caused Boaz's attention to be attracted to her and this is why he enquired from his manservant who she was. It is said that she either sat down or stood upright while gleaning, while the other women stooped gracelessly.<sup>1</sup> She remained by herself whereas the other women jested with the reapers,<sup>2</sup> and, she turned herself away so the reapers could see neither her face nor her fingers.<sup>3</sup> While the other women gleaned among the sheaves, she gleaned only that which had been left behind for the poor.<sup>4</sup>

She refused to appear in public dressed up and perfumed lest she should be mistaken for a prostitute,<sup>5</sup> but from the

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1. Ruth R. IV 6, Shab. 113b, Rashi.
  2. Ruth R. IV 6.
  3. Ruth Z.
  4. Ruth R. IV 6, Rashi. 7
  5. Rashi on iii 6.

fact that she represents Boaz as telling her to stay with his 'young men' (ii 21) whereas Boaz actually said 'young women' (ii 8), it was deduced that she had not completely rid herself of the unchaste thoughts which characterized the heathen Moabites. Salmon ben Yeroham came, though perhaps unwittingly, to the defence of Ruth's character when he explained the discrepancy between Boaz's words and Ruth's report of them by suggesting that Boaz had said 'with my young men' as well as 'with my young women' but that the writer had omitted the former phrase from his record of Boaz's speech.

It is said that Ruth was a daughter<sup>1</sup> or a granddaughter<sup>2</sup> of Eglon, King of Moab - it was Eglon's reward for rising to meet Ehud (Ju. iii 20) that the Davidic dynasty should descend from him.<sup>3</sup> Ruth's royal ancestry is also referred to in Ruth Zuta on ii 15: 'When she had gone away (to glean) Boaz said to his man "Do not despise her for she is a daughter of kings"'. She was forty years old at the time of the story<sup>4</sup> but still very beautiful. To Boaz's words 'that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich' (iii 10), ibn Ezra adds 'for all love you on account of your beauty' and, commenting on ii 11, Salmon points out that 'Boaz knew that all the men, every one of

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1. Ruth R. II 9, Sot. 47a, San. 105b, Targum i 4.

2. Naz. 23b, Hor. 10b.

3. Ruth R. II 9.

4. ibid VI 2.

them longed to marry her". The ultimate tribute to Ruth's physical attractiveness is to be found in R. Johanan's interpretation of **וְיָקָר מְקַרָּה** (ii 3) - 'everyone who saw her ejaculated semen' ( **מְרִיק קְרִי** ).<sup>1</sup> According to R. Tanhuma Ruth lived to see Solomon's coronation<sup>2</sup> but, while it need not be totally inconceivable that a woman should survive into her great-great-grandson's lifetime, his evidence for this view is not very strong: he interpreted 'the king's mother' (I Kings ii 19) as 'the mother of the dynasty' viz. Ruth.

The meaning of Ruth's name was explained in various ways. The Peshitta calls her **רַעוּת**, apparently in an attempt to give her name the meaning 'friendship'. It is unlikely that this is the true etymology of the name for it would seem improbable that the 'ayin should already have been lost in Biblical Hebrew. According to the Haggadists Ruth's name signifies that she paid attention ( **רָאָה** ) to her mother-in-law's words,<sup>3</sup> or that she recoiled ( **רָחָה** ) from sin.<sup>4</sup> Both of these etymologies are pure midrash. In R. Johanan's view, Ruth was so-called because she was a worthy ancestress of David, with whose songs and hymns God was 'satiated' ( **רָוָה** ),<sup>5</sup> and it is probable that, in this case, the midrashic exposition is based on the philologically accurate view that **רָוָה** is derived from the root **רָוָה**.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ruth R. IV 4: Rabinowitz translates 'was sexually excited'.
  2. Ruth Z., Introduction.
  3. Ruth R. II 9.
  4. Ruth Z.
  5. Ber. 7b, B.B. 14b, Ruth Z., alternative view.
  6. H. Bruppacher, "Die Bedeutung des Namens Ruth", *ThZ* 22 (1966) pp.12-18, has proposed that the form **רָוָה** is a development from **רָוָה**, a noun (formed in the same way as **רָוָה**, **רָוָה**, **רָוָה**, from the root **רָוָה**).

Orpah was the one who turned her back ( עָרַף = neck) on her mother-in-law.<sup>1</sup> In one place she is called Ruth's sister<sup>2</sup> and in another both are said to have been daughters of Eglon.<sup>3</sup> Rab and Samuel identified her with הרפה (II Sam. xxi 16, 18, 20, 22).<sup>4</sup> Rab said her name was הרפה but she was called ערפה because all had intercourse with her from behind ( עורפין ); Samuel said her name was ערפה but she became known as הרפה because all ground her like bruised corn ( הרפוח ).<sup>5</sup> In the same place it is said that the four warriors who are mentioned in II Sam. xxi were born to Orpah as her reward for having shed four tears for her mother-in-law - she wept twice (Ruth i 9, 14), using both eyes, therefore she shed four lots of tears. According to R. Judah it was her reward for having gone four miles with Naomi,<sup>6</sup> while R. Berekiah said that, as a reward for Orpah's having gone forty paces with Naomi, her son Goliath escaped retribution for forty days.<sup>7</sup> These warriors (or, at least, Goliath) were conceived on the night after Orpah parted from Naomi and Ruth, when she was raped by a

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1. Ruth R. II 9.
  2. Ruth Z. on i 12.
  3. Ruth R. II 9.
  4. According to Levy, Neuhebräisches und Chaldäisches Wörterbuch, I 495, ערפה occurs in the parallel text in I Chr. xx 4ff, but I have not found this so.
  5. Sot. 42b.
  6. Ruth R. II 20.
  7. ibid.

hundred Philistines.<sup>1</sup> R. Tanhuma thought there was also a dog involved, since Goliath said "Am I a dog?" (I Sam. xvii 43).<sup>2</sup>

Boaz was one of the most important men of his time. He was identified with the judge Ibzan,<sup>3</sup> and in the haggadic commentary 'Handschrift aus Jemen' cited by Hartmann he is designated 'President of the Court'.<sup>4</sup> He was identified with Shazaraim (I Chr. viii 8f) who 'begot children in the field of Moab' - this was construed as a reference to his marriage to Ruth.<sup>5</sup>

It is said that the famine, with which the book of Ruth opens, came to an end as a result of Boaz's intercessions,<sup>6</sup> and the modification of the ban on Ammonites and Moabites was attributed to him.<sup>7</sup> He was, furthermore, credited with the institution of the use of the divine name in greetings<sup>8</sup> and also, according to Hartmann's 'Handschrift aus Jemen' with the introduction of the shoe-ceremony in business transactions and of the blessing at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony.<sup>9</sup>

No explanation of the name Boaz appears in the midrashic

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1. Ruth R. II 20; Ruth Z.
  2. Ruth R. *ibid.*
  3. Targum i 1, 6, iv 21; B.B. 91a; Rashi on i 1; ibn Ezra on ii 1; Qimhi on i 1.
  4. D. Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth in der Midrasch-Literatur, (Leipzig 1901) pp.57, 64.
  5. Ruth R. IV 1.
  6. Targum i 6, iii 7, iv 21.
  7. Targum ii 11; Ruth R. IV 1.
  8. Ruth R. IV 5; Ber. 54a; Makk. 23b.
  9. D. Hartmann, op. cit. pp.78, 82.

literature but attention was drawn to the construction

וּשְׁמוֹ בְּעַז (ii 1) and the general rule was drawn up that in the case of wicked men the name precedes the שְׁמוֹ, but in the case of righteous men the word שְׁמוֹ precedes the name.<sup>1</sup>

From Boaz's reference to 'young men' (iii 10) it may clearly be inferred that he was no longer young himself:

R. Johanan asserted that Boaz was in fact eighty years old at the time of the story and had no children.<sup>2</sup> He was either a brother,<sup>3</sup> a nephew,<sup>4</sup> or a cousin<sup>5</sup> of Elimelech and, because he is not mentioned again after the text says of him that 'he took Ruth ... and went into her' (iv 13) and because it does not even say 'she bore him a son', the haggadists concluded that Boaz died on, or shortly after, his wedding-night.<sup>6</sup>

The anonymous redeemer who appears in the fourth chapter of Ruth was called 'Tob'<sup>7</sup> because the word טוֹב may be read as the subject of בְּאֵלֶךְ in Ruth iii 13, where Boaz first speaks of him, but R. Joshua thought his name was פִּלְנִי אֶלְמִנִי<sup>8</sup> - the phrase by which Boaz hailed him in iv 1. R. Samuel b. Nahman

1. Ruth R. IV 3, where exceptions to this rule are also explained.
2. Ruth R. VI 2.
3. Ruth R. VI 3.
4. ibid; B.B. 91a; Rashi on ii 1.
5. Ruth Z. on ii 1.
6. Ruth Z. on iv 13.
7. Ruth R. VI 3; Ruth Z. on iii 13, iv 1.
8. Ruth R. VII 7.

explained that he was called by this name because he was ignorant ( **אֵלֶּם** ) of the law 'Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabitess'.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the relationship between Boaz and Elimelech, there was no doubt that Elimelech and 'Tob' (or 'Ploni Almoni') were brothers.<sup>2</sup>

Of Obed nothing was said except that his name was explained. The Targum adds to his name in iv 21 the comment "Who served the Lord of the World with a perfect heart". Ibn Ezra's explanation of the name Obed seems a bit dubious: 'it is possible that Obed was so called because an old man had begotten him, who only married the woman for the sake of the glory of God; and also the mother forsook her religion and her native land and sought refuge in the shadow of the wings of God'. The Anonymous Rabbi's view that Obed was so called because 'he would be serving Naomi' is rather more satisfactory: Josephus also explained the name in this way.

The people listed in the genealogy of iv 18-22 were not ignored by the haggadists. The Davidic genealogy passes through Ram rather than Hezron's first-born son, Jerahmeel, because the latter married a Canaanite woman in order to achieve distinction through her ( **לַהֲחַעֲסֵר בָּהּ** ). Her name was **עַטְרָה** (I Chr. ii 26).<sup>3</sup> Salmon lived at Netophah and deservedly so, for his sons 'did away with the guards which Jeroboam the Wicked set over the ways, and

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1. Ruth R. VII 7.
  2. Ruth R. VI 3; B.B. 91a; Rashi on ii 1.
  3. Ruth R. VIII 1.

the deeds of the father and sons were as fragrant as netopha'.<sup>1 2</sup>  
 Jesse was identified with one Nahash<sup>3</sup> for the very good reason  
 that Abigail and Zeruah are said, in I Chr. ii 16, to have  
 been sisters of David and daughters of Jesse while, according  
 to II Sam. xvii 25, they were daughters of Nahash.<sup>4</sup> The reason  
 why Jesse was known by this name is that he was a perfectly  
 righteous man who would not have died but for the fact that all  
 men had been condemned to die because Adam and Eve had followed  
 the advice of the serpent ( שנ ). According to the Targum  
 Jesse 'lived many days before the counsel was remembered before  
 the Lord which the serpent gave to Eve, Adam's wife, to eat of  
 the tree, the fruit of which those who eat are wise to know  
 good and evil; through that counsel all who dwell on the earth  
 are condemned to death, and through that counsel Jesse the  
 Righteous died'.

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1. An aromatic gum.
  2. Targum iv 20.
  3. Targum iv 22.
  4. This explanation is given in Shab. 55b. <sup>11</sup>



## D. HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL INTEREST.

One interest of Jewish exegesis lay in defining more precisely than is done in the biblical text, which refers only to 'the days when the judges were judging', what was the historical period in which the action of the story of Ruth took place. Josephus introduced his version of the story by saying that Eli, the high priest, succeeded Samson as leader of the Israelites and it was in his days that the events related took place. This dating is probably based simply on the position of the book of Ruth in the Septuagint, immediately before the story of Samuel in which Eli is represented as an old man.

The expression 'days when the judges were judging' was taken literally by some of the early Rabbis, and an attempt was made to find a period when two judges, or more, held office simultaneously. Rab thought the 'judges' referred to were Baraq and Deborah; R. Joshua b. Levi said 'Shangar and Ehud'; R. Huna, reasoning that 'judge' means 'one judge', 'judges' means 'two judges' and 'the judges' means 'three judges', decided that 'the judges' could only be Deborah, Baraq and Jael.<sup>1</sup>

Another tradition of fixing the date of the story - perhaps a Babylonian one, as opposed to the Palestinian tradition of the midrash Rabbah - is found in the Targum and the Babylonian

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1. Ruth R. I 1.

Talmud (B.B. 91a) and quoted, probably from the latter, by Rashi, ibn Ezra and Qimhi. This tradition identifies Boaz with the judge Ibzan, who is mentioned in Ju. xii 8, apparently solely on the grounds that both came from Bethlehem. This identification had the effect of explaining why it is that such an important man as Boaz undoubtedly was is not mentioned in the book of Judges; he is mentioned there, but under another name.

It would appear that some authorities located the story in the time of Gideon, believing that the notice that the Midianites "left no means of sustenance in the land of Israel" (Ju. vi 4) provided an explanation for the famine mentioned in Ruth i 1. The identity of those who held this view cannot now be ascertained, for it is known to us only through Salmon ben Yeroham, who rejected it on the grounds that "if it had been at the time of Gideon, Elimelech and his household would have returned from the fields of Moab after seven years, for it says 'And the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years'" (Ju. vi 1).<sup>1</sup> Since Elimelech's family remained in Moab for some ten years after his death the story had to be located in some other period and Salmon decided on the time of Tola ben Puah (Ju. x 1) as the most likely period. He pointed out that Boaz

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1. Salmon ben Yeroham on Ruth i 1. It is, perhaps, worthy of note that the view that the events of Ruth should be located in the period of Gideon emerged again in the nineteenth century in C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, (Edinburgh, 1872) pp.466, 471.

lived roughly halfway between the time of Nahshon, who took part in the Exodus, and the time of David, and that Boaz was an old man at the time of the events related, as may be deduced from his reference to 'young men' (Ruth iii 10).

Towards the end of his commentary Salmon, setting the genealogy from Perez to David against the biblical chronologies, pointed out, first, that the period from the birth of Perez to the beginning of Solomon's reign was six hundred and ninety-six years: Hezron, son of Perez, was one of those who went down to Egypt with Jacob (Gen. xlvii 12) so Perez must have been at least ten years old then, and this (rather conservative) estimate of ten, plus two hundred and ten years for the period of the sojourn in Egypt plus four hundred and eighty (I Kings vi 1) gives seven hundred years for the period from the birth of Perez to the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Since Nahshon took part in the Exodus (Num. i 7, ii 3 et al.), the five generations from Perez to Nahshon should cover a period roughly equivalent to that of the sojourn in Egypt - some two hundred years - and this seems plausible enough, but the fact that some five hundred years are left to be spanned by the generations between Nahshon and David (that is, six generations including David's lifetime, as Salmon must have intended since one of his basic points of reference is the fourth year of Solomon's reign) means that these generations must have been unusually long.

Ibn Ezra also engaged in a little arithmetic in connection with the genealogy. Starting from the principle that Nahshon may be deemed to have died in the wilderness since he was, presumably, a grown man at the time of the Exodus inasmuch as he was 'a standard

-bearer and leader of Israel', he calculated that there were three hundred and sixty six years between the entry of the Israelites into Canaan and the birth of David (i.e. four hundred and eighty years for the period from the Exodus to the building of the Temple, minus the four years of Solomon, the seventy years of David's life and the forty years of wilderness wandering). There are only four generations in the genealogy to cover this period of three hundred and sixty six years so each man must have been over ninety when he begot his son - assuming that Salmon, Boaz's father, was only one year old at the time of his arrival in Israel. If he were a grown man the generations would have to be even longer, but Ibn Ezra did not go into this possibility. He did, however, rise to meet the possible objection that Nahshon may have been a young man at the time of the Exodus (and, therefore, not have died in the wilderness), and pointed out that, even assuming Nahshon to have been eighteen years old at the time of the Exodus, his descendants of the next five generations must each have begotten their sons at an average age of eighty-four.

There is not a lot of difference between the two conclusions and ibn Ezra seems to have preferred the latter himself. He points out that these results are in accord with what we know of that family, for Boaz was an old man at the time of the story and Jesse must have been advanced in years when David was born since he was his eighth son.

The major genealogical problem which the early Rabbis faced was that of the relationship between Boaz, Elimelech and the anonymous redeemer, who was known variously as 'Tob', 'Ploni Almoni'

or 'the redeemer'. Ruth Rabbah VI 3 quotes 'the Rabbis' as saying that Tob, Elimelech and Boaz were brothers. This is clearly based on the literal reading of Ruth iv 3 where Boaz speaks to the redeemer of 'our brother Elimelech', and the same view also appears in B.B. 91a, where the redeemer is called Ploni Almoni and Naomi's father - for no apparent reason - is introduced as a fourth brother. Rashi quotes from this source for his comment on Ruth ii 1.

However, if Boaz and the redeemer were both brothers of Elimelech, why did the latter take precedence in the matter of redeeming Elimelech's field? In order to answer this question R. Joshua b. Levi, reasoning that 'brother' need not necessarily be understood as referring only to a brother but may apply to any male relative,<sup>1</sup> concluded that Salmon, Boaz's father, Elimelech and Tob were brothers.<sup>2</sup> Salmon ben Yeroham suggested that Tob was an uncle of Mahlon and Chilion while Boaz was the son of another uncle and, therefore, their cousin, and an uncle takes precedence over a cousin in matters of inheritance and redemption. According to another view, as Salmon also mentions, Boaz and Tob may have been actual brothers who were, both of them, cousins of Mahlon and Chilion, and Tob took precedence over Boaz

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1. Rashi, quoting R. Joshua, cites Gen. xiv 14 where Lot, Abraham's nephew, is referred to as his 'brother'.

2. Ruth R. VI 3.

simply because he was the elder of the two. They could equally well, of course, both have been brothers of Elimelech if Tob's precedence is to be explained from the fact that he was older than Boaz, but this possibility does not appear to have been considered unless it was on the basis of this reasoning that 'the Rabbis' maintained their view that Tob, Elimelech and Boaz were brothers - perhaps the fact that the names are arranged in this order is intended to suggest that Tob was older, Boaz younger, than Elimelech. Salmon also suggests a third possibility: perhaps Tob was a cousin of Mahlon and Chilion while Boaz was a second cousin.

A lesser genealogical problem was that the biblical text knows nothing of Ruth's antecedents but the haggadists soon put this right: Ruth was the daughter<sup>1</sup> or granddaughter<sup>2</sup> of Eglon, king of Moab, who was a son<sup>3</sup> or grandson<sup>4</sup> of Balak.

The Targum interpolates into its translation of Ruth i 1 a list of ten famines which "were decreed by Heaven to be in the world from the day of the creation of the world until the king Messiah should come". The fact that such a list was compiled may probably be taken as evidence of some kind of historical study on the part of the Rabbis; the fact that it is included

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1. Ruth R. II 9; Sot. 47a; San. 105b; Targum i 4; Rashi.
  2. Waz. 23b; Hor. 10b.
  3. Sot. 47b; San. 105b.
  4. Hor. 10b.

in the text of the Targum no doubt indicates the Targumist's interest in verifying the statement of the opening verse that 'there was a famine in the land' at that period. This list of ten famines also appears in Ruth Rabbah I 4 and in other places<sup>1</sup> with slight differences in the order of its arrangement. It is only in the Targum that the famines are listed in correct chronological order thus:

'The first famine was in the days of Adam; the second famine was in the days of Lamech; the third famine was in the days of Abraham; the fourth famine was in the days of Isaac; the fifth famine was in the days of Jacob; the sixth famine was in the days of Boaz who is called Abzan the Righteous who was from Bethlehem, Judah; the seventh famine was in the days of David the king of Israel; the eighth famine was in the days of Elijah the prophet; the ninth famine was in the days of Elisha in Samaria; the tenth famine is to be in the future, not a famine of eating bread nor a drought of drinking water, but of hearing the word of prophecy from before the Lord'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. D. Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth in der Midrasch-Literatur, (Leipzig 1901), p.4, mentions three places in Bereshith Rabbah, as well as one each in the midrash on Samuel, the midrash Lekah Tob and Yalkut Shimoni.
  2. In Ruth R. I 4 and the places cited by Hartmann the tenth famine is one which "rolls around and visits the world" or, as we might say in modern parlance, it is in orbit around the world and comes down to earth from time to time. Thus all the other famines of history are neatly accounted for.

## E. DIDACTIC AND HOMILETIC USE OF THE STORY.

To the casual reader, or even to the critic, it may appear that, apart perhaps from such general considerations as the description of Ruth's loyalty to Naomi and Boaz's generosity to Ruth, there is little of moral or didactic value in the book of Ruth. Indeed it may not be out of place here to mention the thinker who found in it only a kind of negative virtue and whose comment may merit quotation in extenso:

" .... the book of Ruth, an idle, bungling, story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country girl creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz. Pretty stuff indeed to be called the word of God! It is, however, one of the best books in the Bible, for it is free from murder and rapine".<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, those authorities with whose treatments of Ruth we are presently concerned would hardly have concurred in such a radical view. The Rabbinic view of the value of the book of Ruth, is, perhaps, best summed up in the words of R. Ze'ira, who is reported to have said:

"This scroll tells us nothing of cleanliness or of uncleanness, either of prohibition or permission. For what purpose, then, was it written? To teach how great is the reward of those who do deeds of kindness".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Thomas Paine, The Age of Reason Part II, (London, 1795) p.23.

2. Ruth R. II 14.



The view has been presented above that the haggadic expansions of the story of Ruth were motivated by a desire to fill in various circumstantial details which were felt to be missing and to provide answers for questions which arose from the biblical account. Here it must be said that there was also a homiletic purpose involved in haggadic exegesis.

Remembering that it was a common practice of the Rabbis not necessarily to point a moral with every homily, but frequently to tell a story and <sup>a</sup>leave it for him who had ears to find its application for himself, we may find a moral at every turn in the specimens of haggadah which have been cited above. In the explanation of Elimelech's death, for example, there is a sermon on selfishness, while various virtues are preached in the elaborations on the characters of Ruth and Boaz. A list of lessons thus taught might be drawn up but to draw out morals where the Rabbis deliberately left this undone seems supererogative and so we may turn to consider the ways in which the biblical text was itself employed for teaching and homily.

The simplest level of homiletic exposition in the midrashic literature may be exemplified in the moralizing comments which are attached to various phrases in the biblical text. The description of Elimelech as "Naomi's husband" at the time of his death (i 3) inspired the comments "A man is not dead except to his wife"<sup>1</sup> and "the death of a man is felt by none but his wife",<sup>2</sup>

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1. San. 22b; Rashi.

2. Ruth R. II 7.

while Naomi's suggestion that her daughters-in-law should return "each to her mother's house" (i 8) drew from R. Meir the observation that "a heathen has no father".<sup>1</sup> From the phrase "each of you in her husband's house (i 9), Ruth Rabbah drew the conclusion that "a woman has no contentment except in her husband's house",<sup>2</sup> while ibn Ezra attached a similar comment - "A woman has no rest until she is married" - to Naomi's question "Shall I not seek a rest for you?" (iii 1). The truth of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac's comment "a woman prefers a poor young man to a wealthy old man",<sup>3</sup> which is attached to "after young men whether poor or rich" (iii 10), may be debated, but it appears elsewhere and may have been a popular proverb.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the book of Ruth was found to attest to the general truth that "Fate remains suspended for ten years"<sup>5</sup> - this was deduced from the fact that Mahlon and Chilion lived, presumably happily, for ten years with their Moabite wives before being punished for their sins. The Kethibh **נשק' (i 8)** shows that, after the resurrection, God will give his reward to Israel for the charity which it practised,<sup>6</sup> but unfortunately

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1. Ruth R. II 13.

2. ibid II 15.

3. ibid VI 2.

4. This is suggested by D. Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth in der Midrasch-Literatur, (Leipzig, 1901) p.65 n.5, where other occurrences are cited.

5. Ruth Z. on i 4.

6. ibid on i 8.

the midrashist did not explain the logic which led him to this conclusion! Taking from the text the fact that Ruth and Naomi were to be separated by death (i 17), it was concluded that after death every pious man (and, presumably, woman!) has his own dwelling and each man leads an isolated life.<sup>1</sup>

The midrashists also derived from the story of Ruth guidance on various matters of morality and social behaviour. From Naomi's use of the word 'night' (i 12) R. Johanan taught that intercourse should take place not by day but by night.<sup>2</sup> The fact that Orpah 'kissed her mother-in-law' (i 14) shows that one may kiss people when parting from them: kissing is permissible on only three occasions - on meeting, on parting, and on the conferment of high office. R. Tanhuma added the proviso that one may kiss relatives, presumably meaning at any time.<sup>3</sup>

Boaz is supposed to have instituted a rule that the name of God should be used in greetings<sup>4</sup> because he said "Yahweh be with you" to his reapers and, from the fact that Boaz stayed at the threshing-floor all night R. Abba b. Kahana deduced that a scholar should not go out alone at night.<sup>5</sup> Here, as in other cases which have been mentioned above, the logical connection

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1. Ruth R. III 4.

2. ibid II 16.

3. ibid II 21.

4. ibid IV 5.

5. Hul. 91b.

between the exposition and the text on which it is based is hard to see. It may also be observed that this view may not have been popular amongst the Rabbis, for it does not occur anywhere else. "An inferior has no right to take a seat until his superior gives him permission" - this is the lesson which R. Alexander drew from the fact that the elders sat down (iv 2) only after Boaz had told them to do so.<sup>1</sup> From the same passage R. Eleazar b. Jose derived the lesson that a quorum of ten is required for the pronouncement of the blessing at a marriage ceremony, while R. Judan b. Pazzi pointed out that this applied even in the case of the marriage of a widow and widower.<sup>2</sup>

Since Ruth was, to the Rabbis, a model proselyte, it is scarcely surprising to find that several important lessons on the subject of proselytism are to be learnt from her story. First of all, a would-be proselyte should be repulsed three times - to said R. Samuel b. Nahmani in the name of R. Judah b. Hanina - because Naomi had asked Ruth to go back three times before finally allowing her to accompany her.<sup>3</sup> According to Ruth Zuta it is necessary to repulse the would-be convert only twice. This is presumably based on Naomi's use of the two verbs שָׁנָה and לָכַךְ (i 12).

The next stage, for the would-be proselyte who persists

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1. Ruth R. VII 8.
  2. ibid.
  3. ibid II 16.

in his desire, is that he should be informed of what is involved in conversion.<sup>1</sup> This is derived rather from the catechisms which is built up around Ruth's speech of i 16f rather than from anything in the biblical text. "But he is not to be overburdened or examined too closely"<sup>2</sup> - this is deduced from the fact that Naomi stopped trying to persuade Ruth to return to Moab on seeing that she had made up her mind to go with her. A proselyte who has passed these tests is to be treated as an equal of the Jew by birth because, after her conversion, the scripture makes Ruth equal to Naomi and says "the two of them went" (i 19).<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps it should be mentioned, in this connection, that Boaz's advice to Ruth "Do not go to glean in another field and do not move on from here" (ii 8) was interpreted as a warning against apostasy. The midrash comments that the first part of this verse is like "thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. xx 3), the second like "this is my God and I will glorify him" (Ex. xv 2):<sup>4</sup> the verse is, as Rabinowitz observes, "homiletically applied to gleaning in other spiritual fields". Naomi's advice to Ruth (iii 3) is also interpreted homiletically: "Wash yourself" means "Wash yourself clean of your idolatry" and "ancoint yourself" refers to good deeds and righteous conduct.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Yeb. 47a; Rashi.
  2. Yeb. 47b; Rashi.
  3. Ruth R. III 5; Rashi.
  4. Ruth R. IV 7.
  5. ibid V 12.

On the more practical side of things the Rabbinic interpreters observed that vinegar is beneficial in hot weather<sup>1</sup> and that threshing-floors should be located in low-lying places. This rule is derived from the fact that Naomi told Ruth to "go down" to the threshing-floor (iii 3) and R. Simeon b. Halafta has an anecdote about a man who, in defiance of this teaching, built a threshing-floor on high ground but found it unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup> The same verse of the biblical text (iii 3) contains the scriptural authority for the Sunday suit: since Ruth was undoubtedly already wearing clothes when Naomi told her to wash and dress herself, the garments which are referred to in Naomi's remarks must have been another set - Sabbath garments, in fact<sup>3</sup> - and R. Hanina and R. Simlai taught from this that a man should have two sets of garments, one for weekdays and one for Sabbaths.<sup>4</sup>

It may be mentioned here that, since the story of Ruth touches on aspects of Old Testament law, it was used as a source of information on legal matters. We have already referred<sup>5</sup> to the Rabbinic view on the relationship between the story of Ruth and the ban on Ammonites and Moabites of Deut. xxiii 4 with its attendant development of the new law "Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabitess", and we have mentioned<sup>6</sup> ibn Ezra's view

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1. Rashi, ibn Ezra on ii 14.
  2. Ruth R. V 12.
  3. Shab. 113b; Rashi.
  4. Ruth R. V 2.
  5. p.218r.
  6. p.219f.

that marriages between Israelite men and Moabite women were permitted. Nothing remains to be added here on these matters but there remains to be considered the laws of inheritance, redemption and levirate marriage on all of which the book of Ruth touches.

As far as the law of inheritance is concerned, the question which arises from the story of Ruth is how did Naomi inherit Elimelech's field? Amongst our sources this question was raised by Salmon ben Yeroham who asserted (sub iv 3) that Naomi inherited Elimelech's property from her sons "for the mother inherits from the sons if they do not themselves leave sons". In the opinion of the present writer this conclusion may be justified purely on the strength of the book of Ruth; despite the fact that there is no indication in the Pentateuchal laws that a widow was given any interest in her deceased husband's estate. This opinion rests on the belief that a story-teller cannot knowingly present to his audience an incredible situation for, if he did, he must destroy the credibility of his story. Thus, the fact that Naomi is represented as having inherited Elimelech's field shows that the author of the story cannot have believed it impossible for a widow to inherit her husband's property and we may, therefore, assume that this was possible in Israelite law.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The view that it must be accepted that Naomi was able legally to inherit her husband's property has already been expressed by M. Burrows, "The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth", JBL LIX (1940) p.448, and H.H. Rowley, "The Marriage of Ruth", HTR XL (1947) p.88.

It is probable that Salmon founded his conclusion on the more direct reasoning that the Scripture represents Naomi as being in possession of Elimelech's land and therefore she must have inherited it, but he also added two alternative suggestions: the field may, in fact, have been Naomi's dowry and, therefore, its ownership could not pass out of her hands, or perhaps the actual issue of the ownership of the land remained in suspension in case Ruth should have a child who would be heir to Elimelech. The former of these two suggestions has reappeared in modern times in the suggestion of Jepsen that the property originated from Naomi's father and had been held by Elimelech, as an errebu son-in-law, during his lifetime, reverting to Naomi after his death.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ezra thought Naomi came to be in possession of the field because the widow (in this case, Ruth, Mahlon's widow) received a part of her husband's property under the terms of her marriage contract while the mother inherited the rest of it. This view, again, is presumably based on the authority of the scripture and may be one of those places where ibn Ezra was influenced by the Qaraite view.

The process of redemption caused no difficulty to the interpreters of the book of Ruth except when it becomes entangled with Ruth's marriage to Boaz - although ibn Ezra was careful to

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1. A. Jepsen, "Das Buch Ruth", TSK III (1937-8) p.419. Burrows, loc. cit., has challenged this suggestion on the grounds that the text clearly states that the field had belonged to Elimelech.



point out (sub ii 20) that redemption and levirate marriage are two different customs - and so we may turn to the subject of levirate marriage. This arises, first, in our story from Naomi's rhetorical question "Have I still sons in my womb who will be husbands for you?" (i 11) which seems clearly to be a reference to the institution of the levirate. At this point the text of Ruth became a source of polemic between the Rabbanites and the Qaraites: the differing viewpoints of the two sects have been given above,<sup>1</sup> and this verse seemed to support the former against the latter. The earliest stage of this dispute - that is, the assertion that the book of Ruth did support the Rabbanite view - is reflected in our sources only in the commentary of Salmon ben Yeroham, who castigated the 'ignoramuses' who held to this view in apparent defiance of the Talmudic law that no levirate obligation could be imposed on a brother who had not been born before the man died who left the childless widow.<sup>2</sup> The orthodox party had to accept that, according to their laws, levirate marriage for Ruth and Orpah would have been illegal, but they had to explain why the biblical text appeared to assume that it would be legally (though not physically) possible. Ibn Ezra thought that Naomi was suggesting that, had it been possible for her to bear more sons, she would have married them to her daughters-in-law but that she would

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1. See p.35f.

2. Yeb. 2b, 9a, 17a, etc.

have been doing this out of love for them and not out of obligation. Rashi pointed out that it would be legal for Ruth and Orpah to marry posthumous brothers of Mahlon and Chilion because their marriages to the latter were not valid Jewish marriages, they having been unconverted heathens at that time. This accords with his view that Ruth's conversion to Judaism is signalled by her speech of i 16f.

The view that Ruth's marriage to Mahlon was not valid in terms of Jewish law prevented Rashi's understanding of her second marriage as an example of the levirate - he apparently thought that Ruth arbitrarily imposed on the redeemer the condition that, if he wished to redeem the field, he would have to marry her. The Anonymous Rabbi envisaged a situation in which Elimelech's property had passed to Ruth through the terms of her marriage contract with Mahlon and could only be sold to one who was prepared to marry her. Salmon ben Yeroham considered that it was a straightforward case of levirate marriage which was incumbent upon the redeemer as next-of-kin - the Qaraites held that the levirate law applied not to an actual brother of the deceased husband but to a kinsman outwith the degree of affinity within which marriage was prohibited as incest. Qimhi, who had observed (sub i 4) that Ruth and Orpah had been converted to Judaism, suggested that Ruth's second marriage was not a levirate marriage in terms of the Deuteronomic law but it represented a similar custom: a custom by which, if a man, who had no brother, died leaving a childless widow, the obligation to marry the widow fell on his next-of-kin, provided that the

relationship of the next-of-kin lay outwith the scope of the law against incest. This view is essentially the same as that which has been put forward in various forms in modern times,<sup>1</sup> but which must, in the opinion of the present writer, be rejected, in view of his preference, as expressed above,<sup>2</sup> for the reading of the Kethibh קנין in Ruth iv 5; levirate marriage is a marriage of obligation and there is no hint in the book of Ruth that Boaz was obliged to marry Ruth.

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1. By J.A. Bewer, "Die Leviratsehe im Buche Ruth", TSK LXXVI (1903); id., "The Ge'ullah in the Book of Ruth", AJSL XIX (1902-3); M. Burrows, "The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth", JBL LIX (1940); E. Neufeld, Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws, (London, 1944) p.38; H.H. Rowley, "The Marriage of Ruth", HTR XL (1947); T. and D. Thompson, "Some Legal Problems in the Book of Ruth", VT XVIII (1968); et al.
  2. p.238.

## F. THE METHODS OF HAGGADIC EXEGESIS.

The Rabbinic reasoning process, which lies behind the exegetical material which appears in the haggadic literature, is not always readily intelligible and sometimes it can only be wondered at. We have already pointed to several specimens of exegesis which appears to have some connection with the biblical text but where the connection between the two defies logical explanation. Perhaps we may mention here the deliberate misinterpretation of "the days of the judging of the judges" (i 1) as "the days when the judges were being judged", which drew forth the comment "Woe to the generation that judges its judges and woe to the judges that are in need of being judged",<sup>1</sup> and the explanation that the judges were more corrupt than the rest of the people.<sup>2</sup> Those who read the text in this way were able certainly to find in it the explanation that the famine was a punishment for wickedness, but such deliberate misinterpretation is not explicable in logic.

Yet, it can be seen, in many cases, that Rabbinic exegesis was based on a procedure which may be called, in some sense, scientific and which laid the foundations for the truly scientific exegesis, based on grammar and philology, which began to emerge in the latter part of the period with which our study is concerned. This exegetical procedure of the Rabbis may be reduced, in general

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1. Ruth R. Introduction I.
  2. Ruth Z.

terms, to the principle that every word of the biblical text was believed to have its own significance, as distinct from its contribution to the meaning of the sentence, as a whole, in which it occurred. The corollaries of this principle are that the order in which words occur in a sentence and the form or spelling of individual words are also significant, and when these deviate from what is normal or from what may be expected the resultant form is of special significance.

One example of how a difference in word-order in two sentences which have reference to each other could give rise to a piece of haggadah has already been mentioned: we have seen above<sup>1</sup> that it was concluded that Ruth went down to the threshing-floor and there washed, perfumed and dressed herself because the text says "she went down to the threshing-floor and did everything as her mother-in-law had instructed her" (iii 6) and not "she did everything as her mother-in-law had instructed her and went down to the threshing-floor". Here we may mention a few further examples.

Mahlon and Chilion are mentioned together in this order in i 2, 5, but their wives are introduced in i 4 in what appears to be the wrong order, for Ruth, who was Mahlon's wife (iv 10) is here described as "the second": this shows, according to Salmon ben Yeroham, that Chilion married Orpah earlier than did

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1. p.226.

Mahlon Ruth. From the order of the statement that Naomi was left "without her two sons and without her husband" (i 5) ibn Ezra tried to derive a rule of syntax, asserting that "the scripture mentions them (in this order) because it is the standard practice, when it mentions two things, to put the emphasis on the latter". While some sort of case might, perhaps, be drawn up in defence of this viewpoint, ibn Ezra seems not to have believed it himself, for he goes on to suggest the alternative explanation that the order here may have been occasioned "on account of the greatness of her sufferings concerning her sons, for they were young men, while her husband was an old man when he died". The fact that ibn Ezra finds the emphasis to be now on the former part of the phrase instead of on the latter shows that he just could not make up his mind, but he clearly felt that there had to be a reason why the text puts the sons before the husband at this point when in fact the husband had died first.

The idea that there is an emphasis on the first of two things which are mentioned together may, perhaps, be found again in Salmon ben Yeroham's comment on Naomi's reference to the kindness which Ruth and Orpah had shown "to the dead and to me" (i 9), in which he explained that a wife is obliged to honour her husband more than her mother-in-law. By this he presumably means that the kindness which they had shown to their husbands was greater than that which they had shown to Naomi and therefore it is mentioned first, but he also found a second reason for this order of words - a chronological one, for "they had shown kindness to her after their husbands were dead".

If one were minded to join in the discussion of this sort of problem, one might observe that there is more likely to be sense in the latter suggestion than in the former, but such discussion is pointless. The real reason for the order of the words as they appear in the Bible is probably that they sound better that way.

The Rabbis were apparently also concerned to account for the order in which "Rachel and Leah" (iv 11) are mentioned: it is not a chronological order since Jacob married Leah before he married Rachel. R. Berekiah explained that it is because most of those present were descended from Leah<sup>1</sup> (being members of the tribe of Judah) which may suggest that he felt 'Leah' to be in a position of emphasis. Rabinowitz attempts to explain this comment by saying "in order to equalize matters he mentions Rachel first", which can only make sense if it be presumed that he has missed the point of R. Berekiah's comment, is assuming that 'Rachel' is in the position of emphasis, and is then attempting to explain why Rachel is mentioned first when we might expect Leah, as ancestress of the people in the story, to occupy that position. Rabinowitz may have been misled by the fact that R. Abba b. Kahan<sup>2</sup>, whose comment follows that of R. Berekiah in Ruth Rabbah, held the emphasis to be on the first name for he explained that "Rachel was the chief ( עִקְרָה , which he read for עִקְרָה , 'barren' in Gen. xxix 31) wife of

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1. Ruth R. VII 13.

Jacob<sup>1</sup> and this view was followed by Rashi. R. Simeon b. Yohai said that "because Rachel was sneered at, all Jacob's children are ascribed to her"<sup>2</sup> and so she is mentioned first. Ibn Ezra seems to have given up the struggle to decide whether the emphasis is placed on the first or second of two things or persons which are mentioned together, for he reverted, for this phrase, to a chronological explanation. Rachel comes first, he said, because she was Jacob's first wife in his intention.

Having referred to R. Abba b. Kahana's deliberate misreading of Gen. xxix 31, we may mention here a couple of cases in the text of Ruth where exegesis was achieved by a change of pointing. In view of the fact that Ruth was an ancestress of the Davidic dynasty it was inevitable that, when Boaz expressed the wish that her reward should be 'complete' (שְׁלֵמָה - ii 12), the word should be misread as 'Solomon' (שְׁלֹמֹה), and R. Hasa<sup>3</sup> did so. When Ruth said to Boaz "I am not like one of your maidservants" (ii 13) an opportunity was presented to make exegetical capital out of a change of vowels: Boaz replied "God forbid! You are not one of the maidservants (הָאִמָּהוֹת), you are one of the matriarchs (הָאִמְהוֹת)".<sup>4</sup> The word which Ruth had actually used is שִׁפְחָה,

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1. Ruth R. VII 13.

2. *ibid.*

3. Ruth R. V 4 Eng. Tr. The comment has dropped from the Hebrew version, which reads only "R. Hasa said" before continuing with the next comment, but has been restored from Yalkut Shimeoni.

4. Ruth R. V 5.



but perhaps this comment was originally applied to iii 9 where Ruth calls herself **אמה**. It would certainly fit better there.

The repetition of a word or the occurrence of a word or phrase which seems superfluous in its context were also sources of midrashic comment. Thus the fact that **והיו שם** occurs twice in the first verse of 'Ruth' was taken as an indication that there were actually two famines at the time - one of bread, one of Torah.<sup>1</sup> "And they were there" (i 2) seems a superfluous statement coming, as it does immediately after "they came to the country of Moab" and so it was concluded that the verb should be understood in a pluperfect sense. The interpretation "they had been there" in turn gave rise to the idea that Elimelech and his family wandered about to different places in Moab before finally settling down in a place where they had been in the course of their wanderings.<sup>2</sup> There does seem to be a certain awkwardness about this phrase but the present writer would suggest that this results from our verse-division and is easily removed by reading the phrase in conjunction with the following: "While they were there Elimelech died ... etc.".

The description of Elimelech as "Naomi's husband" (i 3) is another case of apparent superfluity for it is already known, by this point in the story, that he was Naomi's husband. Thus it was decided that the phrase was included here to draw attention

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1. Ruth Z.

2. Ruth R. II 6.

to the fact that a man's death is felt most immediately by his wife.<sup>1</sup> According to Salmon ben Yeroham "it shows that he did not divorce her".

The words "the two of them also" which appear alongside "Mahlon and Chilion" (i 5) seemed unnecessary and so gave rise to the haggadah, which we have quoted above,<sup>2</sup> that Mahlon and Chilion first suffered the loss of their wealth and their livestock and then "the two of them even died".<sup>3</sup> The statement "she went out from the place where she was" (i 7) seems superfluous in view of the preceding statement that "she returned from the field of Moab" (i 6), for, as Rashi said, "How could she return if she had not gone out from the place where she was?" The repetition is supposed to teach that "the departure of a righteous man (or, in this case, woman!) from any place is felt and leaves a mark, the splendour, the glory, the praise of the city goes too".<sup>4</sup>

The expression **והלך וחבוא** (ii 3) raised another question, for it must have seemed to the Rabbis that one word must be superfluous if the text merely wished to say that Ruth went to the field. The literal reading of the text gave rise to the haggadah that she went backwards and forwards either in search of

1. Ruth R. II 7; San. 22b; Rashi.
2. p. 217.
3. Ruth R. II 10; Rashi.
4. Rashi; Ruth R. II 12. A similar comment occurs in Bereshith Rabbah LXVIII 6, relating to Gen. xxviii 10 - "And Jacob went out from Beersheba".

suitable company<sup>1</sup> or to mark out the route she must take so that she would be sure to be able to find her way home again.<sup>2</sup> In the case of **הגדר הגדר לי** (ii 11) the repetition of **הגדר**, it was explained, indicates that Boaz had been told twice about Ruth's deeds, once at his home and once in the field.<sup>3</sup> Our Anonymous Rabbi took the double **הגדר** to refer to two pieces of information, one that Ruth had left her father and mother and the other that she had left her native country and come to live among a strange people. From the threefold usage by Naomi of the imperative **שבנה** (i 8, 11, 13) was derived the rule that a prospective proselyte should be repulsed three times before being accepted.<sup>4</sup>

The redeemer said "I am not able to redeem" twice (iv 6) and Salmon ben Yeroham interpreted this as a refusal to redeem the field, on the one hand, and a refusal to marry Ruth, on the other. Since it has already been made clear that the redeemer was not given the opportunity to do the latter - and there is certainly no indication in the text that he refused to undertake anything but the redemption of the field - this must be seen as a haggadic interpretation based solely on the repetition of the phrase.

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1. Shab. 113b.
  2. Ruth R. IV 4; Rashi.
  3. Ruth R. V 3.
  4. Ruth R. II 16.

Then, of course, there is the form of the individual word from which conclusions could also be drawn. Salmon ben Yeroham considered שדי (i 1, 2, 6 etc.) to be the construct plural of שדה: the latter form is used for the first time in i 6 when Naomi heard that the famine in Judah had ended, so he concluded that Naomi had at first been moving around from place to place (this being the only way she could be in 'fields' - the logic is not entirely sound) but when she settled down in one 'field' she heard the good news.

The form ירדה<sup>1</sup> which occurs in iii 3 was read, following the vowel points, as second person feminine singular, but the yod of the old feminine ending was construed as the ending of the first person singular with the result that it was concluded that Naomi said to Ruth "My merit shall go down with you".<sup>1</sup> We may also mention here that, while the Qere קני<sup>2</sup> of iv 5 was followed, the Kethibh קני<sup>3</sup> was interpreted in a similarly mysterious fashion as showing that Boaz knew that he, and not the redeemer, would marry Ruth.<sup>2</sup>

The defective spelling of ומצא<sup>3</sup> (i 9) was, somehow, understood to show that Naomi knew already when she said this that only one of her daughters-in-law would find the rest she wished for them,<sup>3</sup> but how this conclusion was reached is not clear.

1. Ruth R. V 12; Ruth Z.; Rashi.
2. Ruth R. VII 10.
3. Ruth R. II 15.

Rabinowitz, in a footnote to his translation of Ruth Rabbah, observes that this defective form suggests a singular, but the present writer must confess that, not for the first time, he is baffled by this modern Rabbinic logic. Such an interpretation would be more easily intelligible if it were the aleph that were missing (from וּמְצָאָהּ) instead of the he; since aleph has numerical value one, the fact that it was missing could have conveyed to the Rabbis the message "Deduct one". The writer suggests that this exegesis may have been based on a text in which the aleph was missing.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of בְּטָרוֹס (iii 14) for בְּטָרָס, the waw was explained as the numeral six, and the strange form was interpreted by R. Berekiah as teaching that Ruth stayed at the threshing-floor with Boaz for six hours.<sup>2</sup> This leads us into the subject of exegesis by gematria or the interpretation of a word according to its numerical value, which is achieved by adding together the figures which the letters of a word may represent. Thus the word הַרְיוֹן (iv 13) has a numerical value of 271 (5+ 200 + 10 + 6 + 50) and from this it was concluded that the exact term of pregnancy is 271 days.<sup>3</sup>

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1. No such defective MS is known to BH3, but according to D. Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth in der Midrasch-Literatur, (Leipzig 1901) p.18, the midrash Leqah Tob refers to וּמְצָאָהּ being written without א.
  2. Ruth R. VII 1.
  3. Ruth Z.; Nidda 38b.

Interpretation by gematria may be found, at its most bizarre, in ibn Ezra's commentary, though it must quickly be said that he disclaims responsibility for it by attributing it to a man who insisted on telling it to him. There it is said that **כאיפה שעורים** (ii 17), which has a numerical value of 96, is a prophecy that Ruth's descendant Solomon would erect a pillar in the name of his ancestor Boaz and decorate it with 96 pomegranates. Two other interpretations of the same phrase are also given there: it could be a prophecy about Absalom - another descendant of Ruth - who died at the age of 21 ( **כא** - the first two letters), his hair (**שעורים**) being instrumental in his death, or it could be a prophecy of Jesse - also Ruth's descendant - because the initial letters of the two words, **כ** and **ש**, are numerically equivalent to **ישי**, **כ** (20) being equivalent to two yods (10).

The explanation of a word by reference to its use in another context might seem to be a scientific principle, but results obtained by this means were not always scientific. The expression "hand of Yahweh" as used by Naomi in i 13 was interpreted by R. Levi as meaning 'pestilence' because that is its meaning in Ex. ix 3.<sup>1</sup> **מלאה** (i 21) was taken to mean 'pregnant', as it does in Eccles. xi 5,<sup>2</sup> and the interpretation of 'your father and your mother' (ii 11) as 'idolatry',<sup>3</sup> was based on Jer. ii 27 -

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1. Ruth R. II 19; Rashi (modern editions).
  2. Ruth R. III 7; Rashi (modern editions).
  3. Ruth R. V 3.

'They say to wood "you are my father", and to stone "You have borne me"'.<sup>1</sup>

Finally we may mention, in conjunction with these erroneous conclusions which were reached by apparently scientific methods, the one case where the Rabbis were led astray by adhering to the literal reading of the text. This is a place where the text must be suspect, the occurrence of the phrase **אם לא יגאל** (iv 4) in the context of Boaz's address to the redeemer which is otherwise in the second person. Ibn Ezra cites Jonah ibn Janah as having said that **הגאל** would be more appropriate but he refused to accept the emendation himself, preferring to follow Salmon ben Yeroham and the earlier Rabbis who suggested that, at this point in his speech, Boaz turned momentarily to speak to the assembled elders and these words are addressed to them.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ruth R. VII 9 has the comment "This he said to the Beth Din", to which Rabinowitz adds the explanatory note "because it is in the passive" - he translates "If it will not be redeemed". **יגאל** is certainly not pointed as passive in any text which the present writer has examined. Perhaps Rabinowitz really means to say it is impersonal.

## G. TOWARDS A SCIENTIFIC EXEGESIS.

If the term 'scientific exegesis' is defined as referring to a system of exegesis which is concerned solely with the understanding of a text and with achieving this understanding by working in accordance with acceptable rules of logic from a basic grammatical and philological point of view, then it must follow that we may look for a scientific exegesis only in the later part of the period with which the present study is concerned. The study of Hebrew grammar and philology which are prerequisites for scientific exegesis, as we have defined that term, did not come into being until the early Middle Ages: the earliest evidence of such a study, which is displayed in the documents with which we are presently concerned, is to be found in the commentary attributed to Salmon ben Yeroham.

It is not the intention of the writer, however, to deny the scientific nature of some, at least of the exegesis of the earlier period, for the use of paraphrase in the Ancient Versions to convey the meaning of the biblical text where literal translation proved inadequate or unsuitable must certainly be considered a scientific practice, though perhaps in a different sense from that described above. It must also be said that there are various elements in the midrashic literature which indicate that the early Rabbis understood the workings of the Hebrew language though they did not know of a science called grammar. It may, therefore, be considered that the beginnings of scientific exegesis may be found in the midrashic literature in the grammatical comments which occur there.



Thus we find that the usage of the preposition כ with a numeral, as it occurs in כעשר שנים (Ruth i 4), is explained as meaning 'either less or more',<sup>1</sup> which shows that it was correctly understood to have the meaning 'about' rather than its usual meaning 'like'; The Kethibh יעשה and the Qere יש (i 8) were understood to have the different meanings which belong to the imperfect and the jussive.<sup>2</sup> The use of the preposition כ with the object of the verb ענה (i 21) seemed strange - neither the reading of ענה as qal, with the meaning 'answer', as in the Masoretic Text, nor as piel, with the meaning 'afflict', as the Septuagint and Peshitta appear to have interpreted the consonantal text, would really warrant the preposition כ. So the Rabbis proposed to understand ענה as a derivative from עני, 'concern' and thus to understand the usage ענה בי as "All his concern was with me".<sup>3</sup>

We have referred above<sup>4</sup> to attempts by the early Rabbis to give scientific answers to scientific questions and we have mentioned their attempts to answer the questions of what unit of measure was employed for the barley which Boaz gave to Ruth in iii 15<sup>5</sup> and of who removed whose shoe in iv 8.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding

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1. Ruth R. II 9.

2. ibid. II 14.

3. ibid. III 7.

4. p.232ff.

5. See p.232.

6. See p.234f.

the fact that the answers to the former question were inconclusive and those of the majority to the latter incorrect, at least in the opinion of the present writer, this material must still be considered to represent a scientific exegesis. We have mentioned, too, the apparently scientific principle of explaining the meaning of a word by reference to its use in another context which was used with some bizarre results in the midrashic literature.<sup>1</sup> The same principle was used with more satisfactory results in the latter part of the period with which we are concerned and we shall shortly examine these results.

The transition from midrashic to scientific exegesis may be exemplified by noting the change in the interpretation of the word **אפרהים**, 'Ephrathites' which was explained as a title of honour as late as the time of Rashi. This interpretation was presumably based on the fact that in three of its four occurrences in the singular the word **אפרהי** is applied to men who could be considered important or notable - Elkanah (I Sam. i 1), Jesse (I Sam. xvii 2<sup>12</sup>) and Jeroboam ben Nebat (I Kings xi 26).

In the Targum the word was understood to mean 'lords' - **רבנין** is there used in apposition to **אפרהין**. R. Joshua b. Levi said it meant 'courtiers' (**פלטייני**) and Rabbi b. R. Nehemiah said 'aristocrats' (**אבנניסטי**).<sup>2</sup> A knowledge of grammar was necessary before **אפרהי** could be explained as a gentilic noun

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1. See p280.

2. Ruth R. II 5.

derived from the place-name **אפרה** and Salmon ben Yeroham was, consequently, the first scholar represented in our documents to give this explanation though not in these words. He provided three meanings for the word **אפרה** - a man 'from the city Ephrath which is Bethlehem', and this is its meaning here and in I Sam. xvii 12; 'an inhabitant of the land of Ephraim', which is its meaning in I Sam. i 1; and 'one who actually belongs to the tribe of Ephraim', as is the case in I Kings xi 26 and Ju. xii 5. Salmon's position thus approximates to that of a latter-day lexicographer but Rashi, although living over a century later, stuck to the traditional Rabbinic view and said **אפרהים** means 'important men' ( **חשובים** ). He did, however, add the alternative view that it could be related to 'Ephrathah', and all three of the commentaries later than Rashi which we have translated above subscribe to the scientific explanation.

Having said that Salmon ben Yeroham was the first of our commentators to bring a knowledge of grammar to his exegesis, we may now pause to evaluate his grammatical knowledge. The most notable feature of this is his view that the basic form of a verb, the part from which all other forms are derived, is the imperative. This seems clearly to be the significance of his drawing attention to the 'imperative' of a verb. The word 'imperative' has been enclosed in quotation marks because it is difficult to see how some of the forms which he thus designates can really be considered imperatives. He says that **חשברנה** (i 13) has an imperative **שבר**,<sup>1</sup> but the only imperative which can have games in its first

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1. Pointed thus in Markon's text.

syllable is that of the piel of an Ayin Resh (or, perhaps, an Ayin Aleph) verb; since שבר is plainly not one of these it would appear that, if it was Salmon's intention to say that חשברנה is a piel form, his grammatical knowledge left something to be desired.

The word העגנה, in the same verse, he explained as having an imperative העגה and so as 2 f. pl. Niphal of the root עגה, the normal form of which would be העגינה. The position, however is complicated by his further observation that העגנה is related to the word מעוג, which would suggest that he derived it from a root עוג.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he did not clearly distinguish between the two roots. He also suggested an alternative explanation: that העגנה is feminine singular, the he being superfluous, from the root עגן, but this view is scarcely defensible. It is presumably based on the principle, which is made plain in Rashi's commentary, that if העגנה were feminine plural and derived from the root עגן the nun would have to be doubled.

On וצמה (ii 9) Salmon makes the unlikely assertion that the imperative of this verb is צמה, on the ground that, if it were צמא, we should expect וצמאח here; yet he recognized that וצמה should have an aleph, for he observed that 'the aleph is missing' and so it must appear that he had a peculiar conception of the workings of this verb. Perhaps he only intended to say

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1. Rashi (see above p.133) derived העגנה from עוג on the ground that a derivation from עגן would require a doubling of the nun.

that in this instance the verb **צמא** behaves like a Lamedh He verb - as ibn Ezra pointed out in his commentary at this place - but if this were the case he expressed his point of view very badly. He follows this comment with one on the word **הַעֲבִירִי** (ii 8), in which he observed that its imperative is **עֲבִירָה**, but what he intended to convey by this remark is unintelligible to the present writer. Perhaps it might be mentioned here that ibn Ezra also attempted - and also unsatisfactorily - to explain the strange form of this word.

Salmon's knowledge of grammar appears in a slightly better light in his comment on **וּלְקַטָּה** (ii 2):<sup>1</sup> "its imperative is **לְקַט**", he says, and it would appear from this that he has understood it correctly as a piel form, but he then goes on to say that its infinitive is **לְקַט** which leads one to wonder whether he was really able to distinguish the derived forms from the qal. He did, however, display a correct understanding of the cohortative

**אֲלַקְטָה**, explaining it by an infinitive absolute and imperfect construction thus, **לְקַט** (sic) **לְקוֹט**. He also correctly explained the form **לְגַאֲלָךְ** (iii 13) as being built up from the infinitive **גַּאֲלָל**.

It may be mentioned incidentally that the word which Salmon used for the infinitive is **מַצְדֵּר** - the Arabic **مَضَر**<sup>2</sup>

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1. In his commentary this comment is actually displaced to a point immediately following those mentioned above.
  2. Markon, in the introduction to his edition of Salmon's commentary, asserts that **מַצְדֵּר** is not the infinitive but "**הַפְעֵלָה**". The present writer has been unable to find any other meaning than infinitive either in Arabic or in Mediaeval Hebrew; what Markon meant by **הַפְעֵלָה** is an unsolved problem.

- and that he called the vowels sere and seghol simply "two dots" and "three dots" respectively. The expressions which have come down to us as technical terms of Hebrew grammar were obviously unknown to him. He displays a correct grammatical knowledge in his comment on בְּשָׂדֵה אַחֵר (ii 22), in which he explains that this means 'in another field' and that בְּשָׂדֵה אַחֵר would mean 'in another man's field'. However, he did not recognize שְׂדֵי as an alternative form of שָׂדֵה (construct singular) but took it to be a construct plural. This is clear from his comment on i 6, where the form שְׂדֵי occurs for the first time.

Further examples of Salmon's ideas of Hebrew grammar may be derived from the translation of his commentary which is presented above: these examples should suffice to show that he had some system of grammar which led him sometimes to correct, sometimes to incorrect and sometimes to rather bizarre results.

In the commentaries of Rashi and those who came after him we find the conventional system of Hebrew grammar already established. Rashi himself drew attention twice (on i 13, 19) to the fact that ה, pointed thus, is the interrogative particle, and twice (on i 5; ii 6) to the fact that שָׁבָה is in 'the past tense' when the accent is Mil'el (as it is in these places) and 'present' when the accent is Milra'. He also explained his derivation of הַעֲנוּה (i 13) from the root עוּג by the reasoning that if it were derived from the root עוּג the nun would have to be doubled. His point about the importance of the accent in שָׁבָה was repeated by the Anonymous Rabbi, or it may have been a comment by Rashbam that this commentator quoted. The Anonymous Rabbi pointed out that שָׁפּוּט (i 1) is the infinitive, which may

seem an obvious and unnecessary comment but perhaps its purpose was to oppose the view of those who, like the grammarian cited by ibn Ezra, held **שפוט** to be a noun. Both the Anonymous Rabbi and ibn Ezra explained the pausal form of **וְחֹתֶר** (ii 14) and both pointed out that the paragogic nun is of no great significance, the former with respect to **הַעֲשִׂין** (iii 4), the latter with respect to **הַדְּבָקִין** (ii 8), while the Anonymous Rabbi also observed that the short form of the imperfect **וְחָגַל** (iii 7) is equivalent to **וְחָגְלָה**. A noticeable feature of ibn Ezra's commentary is his interest in pointing out the forms in which verbs are used, even if he had nothing else to say about a particular word. Thus, he tells us that **הַעֲנִנָה** (i 13) is Niphal, **מִתְאַמֶּצֶה** (i 18) is Hithpael and **הַגִּדּוּ הַגִּדּוּ** (ii 11) must be Pual "for the subject is not mentioned". This is all in marked contrast to the work of Salmon ben Yeroham who appears not to have known about the derived conjugations.

A natural sequel to this interest in grammatical matters was the explanation of the hapaxlegomena and other rare words or unusual forms which appear in the book of Ruth. The principle that the meaning of a word may be understood by reference to its use in another context, which we have found was used with bizarre results in the midrashic literature,<sup>1</sup> was applied in this later period in a more scientific fashion. Thus the word **חֲשִׁבְרוֹנָה** (i 13) was explained by Rashi as the same word which occurs in

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1. See p. 280.

the phrase **שָׁבְרוּ עַל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ** (Ps. cxlvi 5), while the Anonymous Rabbi and ibn Ezra both referred to the expression **עֵינֵי כָל אֱלֵינוּ יִשְׁבְּרוּ** (Ps. cxlv 15). These commentators also explained the word **הַשְׁבַּרְנָה** directly: Rashi suggested that it is equivalent to **תִּצְפְּנָה**, '(would you) reserve yourselves?', ibn Ezra explained it as 'clinging' (**דְּבוּקָה**) and the Anonymous Rabbi as 'hope' (**תְּקוּהָ**).

**הַעֲגֹנָה** (i 13) is a hapaxlegomenon and we have already referred to Samon ben Yeroḥam's suggestion that it be derived from a root **עָגָה**. Rashbam and Joseph Qara (according to the Anonymous Rabbi) also explained it from the root **עָגָה**, apparently believing that **הַעֲגִינָה** is a variant form for **הַעֲגִינָה**, and gave its meaning as 'anchor' (**עֵיגוֹן**). Rashi, as we have already noted, rejected a derivation from **עָגָה** on the grounds that this would require a doubling of the nun and suggested the root **עָוָה** 'to draw a circle', which he apparently understood also to have the meaning 'to restrict'.

**אֵל תִּפְגְּעֵי בִּי** (i 16) means, Rashi explained, 'Do not urge me' (**תִּפְצְרֵי**) and Rashbam appears to have given a similar explanation;<sup>1</sup> ibn Ezra commented that **פָּגַע** means 'persuasion' and the preposition **בִּי** is always found with it, and Salmon ben Yeroḥam explained **אֵל תִּפְגְּעֵי** as meaning 'Do not implore me' (**אֵל תַּחֲחַנְנֵי**). The expression **עֲנֵה בִּי** (i 21) also attracted general attention and Salmon, Rashi, ibn Ezra and the Anonymous

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1. See above the commentary of the Anonymous Rabbi ad loc.



Rabbi all agreed that it means "he has testified against me". The last-named commentator cited the authority of Dunash for this opinion and ibn Ezra opposed the identification of with the root which means 'to afflict' or 'humiliate'.

**מודע** (ii 1) was explained by Salmon as meaning 'a friend' (**רֵיַע**); Rashi and the Anonymous Rabbi said 'a relative' (**קָרוֹב**), while ibn Ezra said 'a relative who is known' (**קָרוֹב יָדוּעַ**). Rashi also explained **מודעחנו** (iii 2) as 'our relative'; the Anonymous Rabbi explained that **מודעה** is like **מודע** and ibn Ezra commented that the **ה** is superfluous. The majority of modern, like the majority of mediaeval, opinion would incline to the view that **מודע** does mean 'relative' but the present writer would incline rather to follow Salmon in sticking close to the grammatical meaning 'one who is known'.

The verb **וַיַּצַּב** (ii 14) is another hapaxlegomenon, but the cognate expression **בֵּית הַצְבִּיטָה** appears in the Mishnah Hag. III 1 with the meaning 'handle (of a jug)'. Rashi and the Anonymous Rabbi referred to this usage and interpreted the word in Ruth as 'he held out' or 'he handed over' (**הוֹשִׁיט**). Ibn Ezra and Qimhi, observing that there is no other occurrence of the word, explained it, as it seems, purely from its context as 'give' and 'pick up' respectively. Salmon asserted that the **ט** is superfluous and so **וַיַּצַּב** is the same as **וַיַּצַּב**. This is presumably the imperfect of **נָצַב** and Salmon seems to have understood this root to mean something like 'apportion'. Another hapaxlegomenon - **צִבְחִים**, 'bundles' - appears in ii 18, but the same word is to be found in the Mishnah Erub. X 1 and it is explained from there by Rashi, Rashbam and Qimhi.

The root **שלל**, 'to pull out', the infinitive absolute and imperfect of which appear together in the phrase **של חשלו** (ii 16), is also a hapaxlegomenon and, consequently, this required explanation. Salmon explained it as though it were the root **נשל**, saying it is the same verb that occurs in **של נעליך**, 'Take off your shoes' (Ex. iii 5). Rashi explained it from the noun **של** which appears only in II Sam. vi 7 and perhaps there results from textual corruption, but Rashi took it to mean 'carelessness' and interpreted **של חשלו** to mean 'Behave as if you are forgetting'; he also related it to the root **נשל** for he refers to the phrase **ישל זיתך**, 'your olives shall drop off' (Deut. xxviii 40). The Anonymous Rabbi appears to have followed Rashi in explaining **של חשלו** as 'Behave as if you were forgetting', but he also cites Rashbam's interpretation 'Throw aside' ( **שלך** ). It is not clear what either of these two authorities thought the root to be. Ibn Ezra identified the root correctly as **שלל**.

Although the verb occurs in two other places, **וילפת** (iii 8) is a sufficiently rare word to require explanation by all our commentators. In the midrashic literature it was explained from **ליפתא**, 'turnip' - according to Rab it indicates that Boaz's 'flesh became as hard as a turnip',<sup>1</sup> while the Targum, on the other hand, said 'his flesh became as soft as a turnip from fear' - but this kind of interpretation had, happily, been abandoned

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1. San. 19b; Ruth Z.

by the Middle Ages. The difficulty lies in the fact that the root occurs in only two other places - Ju. xvi 29, where the context suggests the meaning 'grasped' and Job vi 18, where the context suggests 'turned aside' - and it is not easy to find a single word which is suitable in all three passages. Salmon ben Yeroham simply referred to the Job passage, where the verb is also Niphal as it is in Ruth, and did not dwell on the problem. Rashi, understanding ... **וַיִּלְפַּח שִׁמְשׁוֹן** to mean 'And Samson seized', explained **וַיִּלְפַּח** as 'he was seized', while Qimhi, who also referred to the Judges passage, explained the Niphal as 'he seized himself' apparently meaning, as we might say, 'he gathered himself together'. Ibn Ezra found that both the Judges and Job passages could be brought together under a root meaning of 'distortion' and explained **וַיִּלְפַּח** in Ruth as meaning that Boaz 'turned from side to side'. The Anonymous Rabbi said the root meaning of **לפח** is 'twisting' and this he understood to be the meaning of **וַיִּלְפַּח** in Judges and of **וַיִּלְפַּח** in Ruth; he translated the word in both places by the French verb 'estordre'. It would seem that this understanding of the word is correct and that the Hebrew verb is to be related to the Arabic **لَفَت**, 'to twist', as it is by our modern lexicographers.

The mediaeval commentators also attempted to explain the term **פלני אלמני** by which Boaz hailed the anonymous redeemer. Rashi explained **פלני** as derived from the root **פלא** which he believed means 'to be hidden' and he cited as evidence Gen. xviii 14 where **פלא** is translated in the Targum by **יחכסי**. He was followed in this interpretation by the Anonymous Rabbi and Qimhi,

both of whom quoted Deut. xvii 8, instead of Gen. xviii 14, where **אלמני** is also rendered **יחכסי** by the Targum. Rashi understood to be the same as **אלמון**, a widower, and he interpreted the word as referring to the redeemer's figurative widowerhood, either in his lacking a name or in his deficient knowledge of Torah. The Anonymous Rabbi construed it from the root **אלם** 'to be silent', 'for the matter has been hushed up and has not been revealed until this day'. According to Qimhi **אלמני** is the same as **עלמוני** and signifies that 'his name is hidden' (**עלום**). Ibn Ezra mentions that 'some say **פלני** comes from **פלא** 'to be hidden' and **אלמני** from **אלם** 'to be dumb, ignorant''. It is, presumably, to be inferred from this that he was himself uncertain of the etymologies of the words. Such comments are significant for observing the development of scientific attitudes towards the study of language.

Side by side with this developing interest in grammar and philology, a reaction set in against the processes of derash by which the rather fanciful exegeses to which we have referred above were developed. This reaction must have owed something, in its origins, to the rise of the sect of the Qaraites who repudiated the authority of the traditional Rabbinic literature and with it the methods of interpretation which that literature had employed. Certainly in the commentary of the Qaraite scholar Salmon ben Yeroham there is a considerable body of material in which the kind of midrashic exegesis which has been encountered in the earlier stages of this study is opposed, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. He opposes the view that

Elimelech was punished by death because he would not accept God's testing by the famine, by pointing out that the verb shows that Elimelech's intention was to stay in Moab only until the famine came to an end and not to settle there permanently, and that there is ample scriptural authority for emigration in a time of famine. He cites, as examples, Abraham's migration to Egypt and the case of the Shunamite woman who went to Philistia acting on Elish's advice. His explanation that Ruth's speech of i 16f shows her love for Naomi and his literal interpretation of "Where you go, I will go" as referring to any place Naomi might choose to go to may be viewed as indicating his rejection of the Rabbanite exegesis of the passage by reading between the lines in the manner which we have described above.<sup>1</sup> Again, in explaining that Boaz enquired of his servant who Ruth was (ii 5) because he noted that she was a stranger, Salmon may be considered to have been opposing the views of the haggadists that Boaz would not have asked about just any or all of the women and that, consequently, his question must have been prompted by his noticing Ruth's modest behaviour. Many more places in which Salmon opposed the midrashic exegesis of a passage may easily be found in the translation of his commentary above.

We find little of such material in Rashi's commentary for, as we pointed out above<sup>2</sup> when we described the general characteristics

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1. P.220f.

2. P.43.

of that work, Rashi was inclined, on the whole, notwithstanding his interest in grammatical and philological matters, to maintain the traditional methods of interpretation. Midrashic exegesis did not, however, survive for long after his time and his pupils preferred to base their exegesis on peshat or simple commonsense rather than the fanciful system of derash. The Anonymous Rabbi, who has been identified as a pupil of Rashbam who was himself a pupil of Rashi as well as his grandson, cites Rashi's view that Elimelech's death was a punishment for his selfishness purely, it seems, in order to refute this opinion. He proceeds to add his own view that "this is not the sensible interpretation (peshat), for it was not out of selfishness that he emigrated but because of the famine", and thus says, in effect, that the text is intelligible in itself and neither requires nor gives any basis for the haggadic accretion.

This passage from our Anonymous Rabbi represents, perhaps, the most direct collision between the two styles of exegesis which may be found in our documents but many other examples are present in the same commentary. To mention only a few, there is Rashbam's comment on 'The two of them also' (i 5) - "Elimelech was already dead and afterwards his two sons also died after him" - which seems, in its simplicity, to be a completely unnecessary, even inane, explanation of the text until it is placed side by side - and the Anonymous Rabbi does this - with Rashi's exegesis of the same phrase - "they suffered the loss of their wealth and their camels and their cattle died and afterwards they also died". Then it becomes clear that it was necessary to express the simple peshat point of view in order to show how illogical and unnecessary

was the midrashic interpretation. With, no doubt, a similar purpose in mind and certainly with similar effect, the Anonymous Rabbi lays side by side Rashi's midrashic and Joseph Qara's straightforward exegesis of Ruth's speech of i 16f.,<sup>1</sup> and in his commentary at ii 4 he points out that, while 'our teachers have taught us good manners' from Boaz's greeting to his reapers, 'this is not the simple meaning ('peshat' - perhaps here meaning 'the primary purpose') of the text'.<sup>2</sup>

Another aspect of peshat exegesis which may be mentioned is the practice of the mediaeval commentators of elucidating grammatical or logical obscurities which they found in the Masoretic Text by paraphrasing the text in their contemporary Hebrew idiom. Rashi's comment on Ruth i 12 - "Even if I thought that there was hope that I might be married again and bear sons ... and more than that, even if I conceived male children this night .... or even if I had already borne sons ..." - must be considered a paraphrase of the biblical text as Rashi understood it. Paraphrase was also used by these Rabbis to express the simple meaning of the biblical text where this admitted, or might be thought to admit, to more than one interpretation, in the same way that, as we have found, it was used in the Ancient Versions. Rashbam's explanation that איש נעמי (i 3) means נעמי של בעלה, 'Naomi's husband', must have been motivated by an awareness that

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1. See p.152f.

2. See p.158.

the biblical phrase could be understood as 'Naomi's man' and an inference made from this that they were not married. We have no indication elsewhere in our documents that such an inference ever was made, but no other reason for paraphrasing such a simple expression is apparent. Rashi also paraphrases 'Behind him in whose eyes I find favour' (אחר - ii 2) as 'Behind whoever it is in whose eyes I find favour' (אחר מי אשר אמצא חן בעיניו) and again it is difficult to see why he should have found this necessary. Perhaps somebody had tried to interpret אחר as 'after' in a temporal sense and to construe the clause as 'after I shall have found favour in his eyes' and Rashi was pointing out, by means of this paraphrase, that this is not the natural sense of the Hebrew. Ibn Ezra refers to a suggestion, which he rejects, that the suffix (in בעיניו) refers to Boaz who has been mentioned in the previous verse. Perhaps the proponents of this view read the text in the way we have suggested.

The process of paraphrase is, of course, closely related to the translation of words and phrases into the vernacular of the commentator, as was done by Rashi, Qimhi and the Anonymous Rabbi, and to the explanation of unusual words by synonyms or circumlocutions in Hebrew, a procedure which we have already described.<sup>1</sup> These processes together lead naturally to the kind of straightforward exposition of the meaning of a text in the

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1. P. 289ff.



commentator's own words which is what we understand today by the word exegesis. A considerable part of our commentaries, particularly the longer ones - that is, those of Salmon ben Yeroham and the Anonymous Rabbi - is made up of material of this kind and many examples may be found in the translations which are given above.

We have come, in a sense, in a full circle in our study. We have traced the development of exegesis from the simple and straightforward explanations of the Ancient Versions to the simple and straightforward explanations of the mediaeval commentators, passing, on the way, through a period when biblical interpretation was anything but simple and straightforward, where we have not infrequently had to abandon all attempts at understanding the principles on which exegesis was based but where we also found the foundations for a scientific exegesis being laid. This last chapter of our study has been deliberately called "Towards a Scientific Exegesis" for, while the definition of scientific exegesis which we have above set out may be summarized by the single Hebrew word pesbat, and while we find the principles of interpretation on the basis of pesbat firmly established in our documents from the Middle Ages, the fact that these same documents have been cited so often in the earlier parts of our study, and the fact that, even in our latest sources, the authority of the Talmud was still seen as a sufficient basis for exegesis show that, by the end of the period with which our study is concerned, derash had still not been completely superseded by pesbat. Indeed, in view of the number of modern views which have, in the course of

this study, been dubbed 'Haggadah', it appears that Rabbinic modes of interpretation have continued, even in recent times, to exert an influence in some circles of scholarship..

## CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages we have examined various aspects of Jewish exegesis of the book of Ruth as this is displayed by the various documents which we have examined, described and, in the case of the mediaeval commentaries, translated into English. We must now draw our study to a conclusion and summarize our findings.

The principal motivation for the considerable exegetical activity which took place in the period which we have surveyed may be attributed to the desire of the Rabbinic exegetes to re-tell the biblical story of Ruth to their contemporary audiences and to ensure comprehension by those audiences of the story. In doing this they encountered a need to clarify certain obscurities and to resolve certain difficulties in the biblical text and, also, to provide answers for various questions which, to their minds, were raised by the story. We have examined the various methods which were employed to meet these needs and to attain these ends and we have seen how the biblical account of Ruth's story was, in the course of time, amplified both by the addition of material in explanation of the genuine difficulties raised by the occurrence in the biblical text of rare words and grammatical obscurities and by the accretion of various details which later ages apparently felt ought to have been included in the biblical story. We have found that the Rabbis also had an interest in applying their exegetical activity to didactic and homiletic purposes and we have noted various lessons on moral and social behaviour

which were drawn by them from the book of Ruth. We have also observed the means by which the Rabbis attempted to locate the events of the story more precisely in the context of Israelite history and to relate the characters who appear in it more firmly within the biblical genealogies. We have, too, in our study examined the principles on which the system of haggadic exegesis was based as well as the more scientific techniques which were employed in exegesis in the latter part of our period.

The history of exegesis in the period with which we have been concerned has been presented in the form of a chronological development which began with the simple exegetical techniques employed by the Ancient Versions and passed through a period of haggadic exegesis to the beginnings of a scientific style of exegesis in the Middle Ages. It must be said, however, that, while this development certainly took place in the period with which we have been concerned and is displayed by the differing natures of the various documents which stem from different times, there was also a considerable degree of continuity in exegesis throughout that period. We have found, for example, that in listing particular exegetical points in relation to various parts of the book of Ruth we have cited some of our earlier documents side by side with some of the later, where similar points of view are expressed in documents from different periods. We have noted, too, in examining the principles on which the system of haggadic exegesis was based, that some of these principles must be considered scientific. In particular the principle that the meaning of a word in a particular context may be better understood by reference to the use of the same

word in another context is one which was used in both the haggadic and scientific systems of exegesis, although in the case of the former it sometimes led to bizarre conclusions. In this respect we must note that there was a continuity so far as some of the principles of exegesis were concerned but that there was also a development in the manner in which these principles were applied.

We may perhaps mention in this connection Rashi's explanation that the word **פלני** is derived from the root **פלא** and that this root means 'to be hidden', which must be considered scientific reasoning, although the conclusion is incorrect, because Rashi based his conclusion on the fact that the Targum understood the root to have this meaning. The same interpretation of the root **פלא** probably lies behind the Septuagint's translation of **פלני אלמני** by **απόφυσ**, 'O hidden one' and here again we may point to a continuity in exegesis from the beginning to the end of our period. We may recall, too, that we have found that the early Rabbis frequently displayed a sound knowledge of the workings of the Hebrew language though they did not know of a science called grammar. Yet the development of the scientific study of grammar and lexicography in the early Middle Ages marks a watershed in the history of exegesis and, as a result, it is right, bearing in mind the degree of continuity which we have pointed out, to treat the history of exegesis in the period from the Ancient Versions to the Mediaeval commentaries as one of development.

In a study which is as broadly based as this one has been, which embraces in its view a period of considerably more than a

thousand years, there must inevitably be raised a number of questions which cannot be answered within the scope of the study itself. In the present study many problems are posed by the documents which we have used as the source of material for our study. Among the Ancient Versions there remains the problem of the origin of the Peshitta with its points of agreement, as we have seen, sometimes with the Septuagint against the Masoretic Text and at other times with the Hebrew against the Greek. Among the mediaeval texts there are the problems of the origin of the commentary attributed to Salmon ben Yeroham and its relationship to the Arabic commentary of Yefeth ben Ali as well as the many difficulties which remain in the text of the Hebrew commentary itself. There is also the problem of the origin of the commentary attributed to David Qimhi as well as the difficulty of the identification of the language of the glosses which appear in it. All these questions must remain unanswered until another occasion.

## Appendix : Hebrew Texts

שא

יחזק דוב מירקון

[ח]

## פירוש יקר ונחמד הרות על מגילת רות לא יסולה בבתם אופור ולשחם לרבינו שלמון בן ירחם וז"ל

יתברך אלוקי ישראל האחד המוקדם אשר ברא עולמו להראות גדולותו ונתן שמי' לשום  
מקום מעטן בשא בבורו הנכבד ולפלאביו הקדושי המיטבחים לשמו ונתן לארץ מקום לשכנות  
בבורו הנראה לנביאים וגם נתן לארץ מקום עבדיו הנבחרים הצדיקים כמו אבי יחיי' כה אמר ה'  
השמים כסאי'. וכאשר הוא גדול ומכבד לא כחר כי אם לעניים ההולכי בדרכיו והוא אותה  
ומכבד להם על כלל בני האדם בבורו צדקתו, שנאמר ואת כל אלה ידי עשתה'. ואם יהיה זה  
העני מיוחד כפני אבות מידע בשר הזה נתקבצו עליו שני דברים, כמו נשיא' בני ישראל הצדיקים  
אשר הם עקיריו ועקר פלגיו וכתבנו, ועוד שנאמר בבור חדת והסחיות נכבד בן 'שרות היום,  
כי נצאנו בעלי חיות יחדו בן 'שרותם בעבור רשעותם, ונצאנו לר אשר יבא בדת 'שראל  
השני והנני אל 'שרות גדולה בעבור צדקתו, כמו יתרו אשר היה לו שם גדול כי האמין בה'  
ובא בתת כפיו, כמו בארתי בענין וישמע יתרו'. ולא זה הדבר בזכרים הנעים בלבד, אלא גם  
על הנשים המאמינות הנחות בני יעל אשר הוכירה דבורה במירתה והגידה שהוא נכבדה לפני  
ה' במדותיו ומגדלות, שנאמר תבוק מנינים יעל'. ובן זאת הנחות המיטבה אשר כאר לנו  
הנפלא בור הגולה יפיו דעתה וזהו אשר בעבור זה השיגה ה' להתחבר עם איש גדול ורם כעל,  
כי היתה חת הכרות, ללמד כי בבור ושרות על בעלי חדת חדת משרות חיות ואשר כל  
מי שנקיים כפיו ה' ויטע ליה כפדתו ודחסה, שנאמר נעקו בר בן יאנקי'.

א.

א. ויהי בימי שפוט השופטים, תהלה כל דבר חייב שתלמד לל העקרים של זה  
הספר, דע כי בתחלה נכתב לו בור הגולה וזה חת כי היתה צדקת ובעלת טעם, והי' הודת  
נעמו ופיו מוסר דעתה ודקדוקה והיא נקובה על הצרות הגדולות והמשינות שבאו עליה ואך  
באה במחשבה שהשיגה ה', שנאמר והיא לך לעיני ומוי', והי' שרע בעבור ערפה אשר היתה  
במחשבת ידמה עיניה לאי בנת שרונה עם בעלה והיתה אוחזת לחיות עם הצותה בעת שהיא  
במחשבת, וכאשר אברה תקבחה עם בעלה, היתה לבאורה ולפטרותה וזה יולד כי חייב איש לחיות  
בדרך אחד כפועלו ועד יום מותו, והי' ידענו פנה צורך מעשיהם בדעתם בהרישה ובחקירה ימי  
שרות משרת אהם והיו נתנים הם ויבטחה היא, והי' נדע מה באור מצות יבום שלה הועלה  
גדולה, והי' שרע יחס נאמנים משלשלת בימי המינות ועד פירן בן יחודה, והי' לכבוש איש  
את יצור כמו בוע להודיע לאלימלך שאי זו משיחה היתה וכל אלה בעבור שרע יחסם העולות  
וההרואות גדולות בעולם הזה ובעולמי הבא, אשר ויהי, הוא סמוך אל הדות יעבדו בזמן  
השופטים, כי בספר שופטים כתב הגדולים והספר כתב לרות ובעו בספר מוסר, כי לא ידעו  
עניני בעי חות עם עניני השופטים, לכן שם לו הגולה עם כל המגלות החמיש וכתבה בתחלה  
בתקופת בתקון הוסן כי בועו מה קודם שלמה ואמר בימי שפוט השופטים, אין הם  
שופטי דעים, כי אין בתבנית הדת של שופטי הדעים, אלא נכתבו לנו הדת של שופטי  
המלכות, והם עתנאל ואחור וישתר ודבורה וגייען וישמשון וישאר השופטים, ואמר שפוט  
השופטים ולא אמר בימי השופטים, כי לו אמר בימי השופטים, לא היה יודיע זה כי נכתב זה  
בימי שרות השופטים, יע לא היינו יודעים כי בזמן שרותם היה זה, וכאשר אבי שפוט  
השופטים ידענו כי בזמן שרותם וזהו הדבר, כי ייש שופט ויקרא שופט עד יום  
מותו ולא יישפוט, לכן אמר שפוט השופטים, ולו אמר והי' בימי פלוגי, אם עתנאל

י' שפוט ס"ז א. י' דעיה ס"ז ב. י' מות נראה שחבר י"ב פירוש על ההודת.  
י' השופטים ב' כ"ד. י' ההלום ב' י"ב. י' רות ד' ס"ז.



[ה]

יצחק דוד מירון

פב

והולתו היינו יודעים כי הוא, לכן אבחו מקצת העלמרים כי זה היה בזמן גדעון, כי אמר בנדיעון ולא ישארו מזה בישראל<sup>א</sup>, ואני אומר כי לו היה זה בזמן גדעון היו שבטים אלעזר וכו' משרה מואב אחר ד' שבטים, כי אמר ויתנם ה' ביד מדין יבעו שבטים<sup>ב</sup>, ואלעזר הלך בשרי מואב מחזק הדעב וישיבו שם עשר שבטים, ואז יבעו כי פקד ה' את עמו לתת להם לחם<sup>ג</sup>, ולא ירחק שהיה זה המעשה בזמן השופטים שלא באר לנו המדומה כמו יאיר ואבנן ותולע, ויקרב כי היה בזמן תולע בן פואה והבדיו קרם ימי יפחה הגלעד, כי בינו הוא שלישי לחזיון, וזמן נחשון עד זמן מועז תיז' שבטים כמו שהוא יקרב כי בועז היה בתוך תי' שנה והיה בינו זמן בזה העת כמו שנאמר הפסוק לבלתי לבית אחי בהדרים וגו'<sup>ד</sup>, ואמר ויהי רעב בארץ, לא היה הרעב לבית לחם לבד, כי אם בכל ארץ ישראל, שנאמר כי פקד ה' את עמו וגו'<sup>ה</sup>, ועוד לו היה מקום בארץ שלא היה בו רעב בארץ ישראל, היה אלעזר חולך שם ולא הלך לידה מואב, ולא היה הדומות רעב בארץ ישראל אלא ברוב עונות, כי הוא ארץ קדושה והוא תקוא שוכנה, אם יהיו רעפים, כמו אפי' בה ארץ אכלת וישבה<sup>ו</sup>, הם ז' גוים, ומשכלת גויה היתה, הוא ישראל ויהודה, וילך איש בבית לחם יהודה, הודיע לנו כי הלך עם אשתו ובניו, כי חוכה על האיש לכלכל לאשתו ולבניו, לכן נעתקו שם, והודיע כי יצא מבית לחם יהודה, ואפי' יהודה, כי יש בארץ ישראל בית לחם אחרת וזאת נאמר, לכן אמר מבית לחם יהודה, ואפי' לגור בשרה מואב, הודיע לנו המקום אשר נעתק שם, כי יבעו כי יש מואב שמה שוכנו והוא קרוב לארץ ישראל ולכן הלכו שם ואפי' לגור, לפר כי הלך לשוב שם עיד ירות ולא לשוב בה תמיד אלא עד יסור הדעב וישובו אל ארצם, וזה ישוב דבר האומר כי לא מה אלעזר ובניו אלא בעבור שלא קבלו נסיון ה' ברעב ארץ ישראל, אלא הלכו בארץ מנאה בעבור השוכה, ולא כן הוא, הלא כנאנו כי אלעזר אמר לשוכות קושי ולכי וגו' וגו' והלכה לארץ פלשתים, וכן ירד אברהם ממצרי, כי הרעב בבוא לאדם בכל מיני עמויות, ואפי' הוא ואשתו ושני בניה הם ד' נפשות, ולו היה לו זולת מהלון וכליון היה יקחם עמו, אז היה הבתוי מוכרים, ואחרת זה הספר יודיע כי לא היה לעצמי זולת מהלון וכליון<sup>ז</sup>, ואמר ושם האיש אליפלך, וזמר לשמו כי הוא היה איש נכבד ומעוקר, וכן זמר לשם זוגתו כי היה לה זכות שתזכר עולם, וזמר שם בנו לחודיע כי היה היתה אשת מהלון, והקדים וזכר הנה על אשתו<sup>ח</sup> ינאמי<sup>ט</sup> מאה<sup>י</sup> בן, ואמר אפרתים, מענה מן עיר אשת אשר היא בית לחם, שנאמר ואהר בית לחם אשתה וגו'<sup>י</sup>, ובמותו אמר דוד בן איש אפרתים<sup>יא</sup>, ויש אפרתי על אופן אהר, והוא בעבור כי שכן בארץ אפרתים כמו אפי' באלקמה בן תמו בן ציון אפרתים<sup>יב</sup>, וגם יש אפרתי כי הוא באמת מושב אפרתים, שנאמר וירבעם בן נבט אפרתים<sup>יג</sup>, ובמותו אפי' האפרתי אתה<sup>יד</sup>, ועוד אמר אפרתים יחודה לשני דברים, הא' לחודיע ולבאר כי הם אפרתים בעבור כי ישבו בית לחם יהודה אשר שמה אפרתה, והב' כי אמר בפסוק הראשון מבית לחם והודיע כי הלך מבית לחם<sup>טו</sup> ולא היה יודיע זה כי הוא משובנו בית לחם, לכן אמר מבית לחם והודיע כי הוא משובנו, ואמר ויבאו ישרי מואב, כי איש באו שם ישבו שרי מואב באו<sup>טז</sup>, וימת אליפלך, לא זמר ללכת שם בעת שיעצו מבית לחם, יעי' בעבור שרי מואב באו<sup>יז</sup>, וימת אליפלך, לא זמר הסופר כמה היה אלעזר בשרי<sup>יח</sup> מואב, ואמר איש נעמי, אהר שאמר ויש אשתו נעמי, הודיע כי לא גרשה נכמי<sup>יט</sup> על דרך ימן סופר עליה הכתוב כי נישאה לבדה בלא סתר, כי הבעל סתר לאשה והוא עומד בכל צרכיה, ואפי' אמר ותשאר היא ושני בניה לסדר כי מת קדם ישינו לבניו וגם לסדר לנו כי מהלון וכליון הם בני נעמי, כי אמר למעלה הוא ואשתו ושני בניו<sup>כ</sup>, והיינו אומרים כי הם בני אביהם בלבד ולא לה, לכן אמר כי הם מטנו ומטתה<sup>כא</sup>.

<sup>א</sup> שופטים ד' ד' <sup>ב</sup> שופטים י' א' <sup>ג</sup> רות א' י' <sup>ד</sup> רות א' י'

<sup>ה</sup> במדבר י"ג ל"ב <sup>ו</sup> יחזקאל ל"ז י"ג <sup>ז</sup> עין מלכים ב' ח' א'

<sup>ח</sup> מכאן מתחיל הכיון B.

<sup>ט</sup> A' ב'א' <sup>י</sup> מידה ד' א' <sup>י"א</sup> שמואל א' א' א' <sup>י"ב</sup> מלכים א' י"א ב'ו

<sup>י"ג</sup> שופטים י"ב ד' <sup>י"ד</sup> B' חסדי: והודיע כי הלך מבית לחם <sup>י"ה</sup> A' מוסק: דבר

<sup>י"ז</sup> A' ואפי' <sup>י"ח</sup> רות א' א' <sup>י"ט</sup> A' ממנה וממנו

4. וישיאו להם נשים. ולא אמר ותשא להם אמה, כי הם נשאו להם<sup>(1)</sup> נשים בלא רצון אמה, כי הם טובות, הלא תראה כי אמר בישמעאל ותקח לו אמו אישה<sup>(2)</sup>, וגם להודיע כי הם היו גדולים ובוגרים. ואם מואביות, היו משיפחת מואב או נתגדלו ונתרכו שם ונקראו בשם מואביות<sup>(3)</sup>. ואולם לא היו מדת ישראל, שנאמר יבמה יבמה אל עמה ואל אלהיה<sup>(4)</sup> ואמר שם האחת ערפה ושם השנית רות. ידענו כי כליון הוא הקטן ולקח אישה קודם שיקח אחיו הגדול טמנו, כי מחלק הוא הגדול והוא בעל רות, 5. וימותו גם שניהם. אמר גם מסוך אל מיתת אביהם. ואם מחלון וכליון שלא נחשבו כי אחת מהכלות משה עם בעלה. ואמר ותישאר האישה. נשארה שכולה מן ילדיה ואלמנה מאישה, כי לא יכשר להאמר כי נישאר ראובן מן שמעון. ואמר מישני ילדיה. אבל כלותיה נשארו עמה וכבר בא מאחת מהן בן שהיה חשוב בעיניה כמו הנאסף. 6. ותקם היא וכלותיה. אחר שמתו בניה שבה. ואמנם<sup>(5)</sup> מה ההגרמה בזה כי שבה כי סר הרעב בארץ ישראל אשר בעבורו נעתקו אל ישרי מואב, שנאמר ויבאו ישרי מואב וגו'<sup>(6)</sup>, כי הכפרים הם כוללת מן הערים, לכן אמר ויבאו ישרי מואב ולא אמר בעיר מואב. אמר מישני מואב באו, כמו אמר ויבאו ישרי מואב<sup>(7)</sup>, כי היתה מחפשת ומבקשת ומשוטטת תמיד לעוברי דרכים. בישרה מואב. בכל מקום ולא שמעה דבר. ואם כי שמעה בישרה מואב. בה"א<sup>(8)</sup>. הודיע כאשר ישבה בשדה אחת שמעה כי פקר ה' את עמו ואז מהרה לשוב. כי היתה מתאוה בארץ ישראל. 7. ותצא מן המקום. אמר בפסוק הראשון ותשב מישני מואב ולא באר כי יצאו כלותיה עמה. ובה הפסוק זכר יציאתם עמה ואם מן המקום אשר נעתקה שמה עד עת יציאתה ולא זה בשם כי רצו בזה המקום. ואמר לשוב אל ארץ יהודה אשר יצאו משם. 8. ותאמר נעמי ליסתי כלותיה. זה יודיע חכמת נעמי וחסידותה כי לא דברה<sup>(9)</sup> להן דבר עד שישיאו עמה. וכאשר התחילו ללכת עמה, אז התחילה לדבר עמהן לגלות מה יוכלנהן, אם ביאתן הוא בעבור אחבת הרת אם לא, שאם לא תבאנה מרוב אחבת הרת לא תניחם ללכת עמה, שנאמר לכנה שבנה אישה לבית אמה. הודיע כי לכל אחת מהן קרובים מקרובי אָן, כי לו היה להן בית אם היה הכתוב מגיד או נעמי היתה אושרת אישה בית אביה<sup>(10)</sup> במנהג התורה שאמרה ושבתי אל בית אביה כנעוריה<sup>(11)</sup> ללמדך כי לא היו להן קרובי אב. ואמר יעשי ה' עמכם<sup>(12)</sup> חסד וגו', כי היתה בספר פנים יפות עם בעליהן ועמדי. 9. ואמר יתן ה' לכם ומצאן מנוחה וגו'. מעי ישרם לכם שיכרסו כמו שהייתן נהוגות עם המתים וגם עמי, והוא שיתן לכם לאחת ואחת איש טוב שתהיו עמו בטובה ובמנוחה, שנאמר ומצאן מנוחה וגו'. ואמר עם המתים אשר הם בזה העת מתים, והם בניה. והקדים זכר המתים לנפישת ליסתי דברים. הא' כי חוב הפעל ראוי על אישנו לבכרו יותר מבודד המות. והב' כי הן עשו חסד עמה אחר שמתו בעליהן. וה' יודיע גודל חכמתה. ואחר שכלתה דבריה הבקת אותן, שנאמר ותישק להן, כי היא בקישה לשלוח אותן ולהשיכן אל ארצן שלא ללכת עמהן. וכבר בני נחמנים וזכרות לבעליהן, שנאמר ותשאנה קולן וגו'. 10. ותאמרנה לה. הודיע כי לא<sup>(13)</sup> היו נפרדות<sup>(14)</sup> ממנה, אלא היו הולכות עמה להיות בתוך עמה<sup>(15)</sup>. 11. ותאמר נעמי שובנה בנותי. שמעה מהן כי אמרו לה כי אתך נשוב לעמך והפצת לנוסותן אם הם<sup>(16)</sup>. בכל לב שלם אומרות זה הדבר או מפני דרך אהבה לבד לחטותן. וכבר נגלתה ערפה כי מפני בוישה היתה אומרת, ונראתה רות כי מפני אהבת הרת עייתה זו. ואמר למה תלכנה עמי. כי אין לכם הועלה בכיאתכם עתי. ואם העיר לי בנים במעי. מענה: לו היו<sup>(17)</sup> בנים היכשר לקחתם ותהיו מוכות לא יכשר להיות לכם לאנשים, כי אפילו על דברי רבנים<sup>(18)</sup> לא יכשר זה, כי הם אמרו אחים המיוחסים בנחלה מן אב ואם צריכים ליבם<sup>(19)</sup> ולא מן אִם. ועוד בעבור אחים שלא היה בעולמו. ואז כרתה תקותן מזה הדבר והיתה מחכה לראות מהן אם תבאנה עמה. אחר זה או לא.

(1) B חסר: להם. (2) בראשית כ"א ב"א. (3) B מואב. (4) רות א' מ"ו. (5) B וא'.  
 (6) רות א' ב'. (7) B חסר: אמר מישני מואב באו כמו אמר ויבאו ישרי מואב. (8) A חסר: בה"א.  
 (9) BA דבר. (10) A אביהן. (11) ויקרא כ"ב י"ג. (12) B עמכן. (13) B חסר: לא.  
 (14) A מופרדות. (15) A חסר: להיות בתוך עמה. (16) B "הוא", תחת "אם הם". (17) B היתה.  
 (18) B רבני. (19) A לייבם.

12. ישכנה בנתי לבן. ואמ' כי אמרתי יש לי תקוה, מע': אמרתי בימי בחורתי יש לי תקוה לקחת איש וגם בקחתי איש הייתי כלילה עמו וילדתי בנים, ועתה אין לי תקוה. ד"א כי אמרתי י. אם אוטר מעתה כי אקח איש ואחיה עמו כלילה תקו את זה אל תקו לזה הדבר, ואמרה זה בתמה. 13. ואמ' הלהן, כמו הלהם, וכן אמ' עשיתן תועבה<sup>12</sup>. ש"ס וגו' אחד. ד"א הלהן, תאמ' לנשים שיצאו עמה לשלחה. ואמרה להן היבשר זה כי ערפה ורות תשכרנה להיות יושבת בלא בעל יוכלו לקבל זה הדבר עד שיכאו לי בנים להשיאן להן. ואמר תשכרנה. תחבו ולא תנישאו לאיש לא יבשר זה כי אכדה תקו<sup>13</sup>. ואמר תעגנה מלשון חכמים עגונות אנונות. ד"א כמו מעוג. תתקבצו עם בני. ואמר פתר בלשון אנונות נתן לנו' מן העקר והוא לשון יחיד נקבה, כמו תאמנה, אשר ה' יתיר והוא תאמן. וכן תעגנה. תענג כל אחת ואחת, תעגן ותתעצב. ואמר פתר בתקבצות נתן לנו' לשון רבים, וצוויי העגה, כמו הקאה תקאנה. ואע"פ שתענינה ב"ב נקודות ואינו ב"ב נקודות והוא כמו ליחמנה, תשכרנה צווי יבשר תשכרנה כמו ולמדנה. ואמ' אל בנתי. מע': אל תלבנה עמי בנותי, או אל בנתי כי לא יבוא לי ולד. ולו היה לי ולד לא היה יבשר לבן לאנשים. ואז כרתה תקותן מזה הדבר. ודע כי מקצת י"א הרבנים הבורים מחשיבים כי זו דאיה לנו כי היבום חייב לב' האחים האמת שנאמ' העוד לי בנים בטי, וזה הטא. כי גם החכמים לא התירו ליבום אלא הב' אחים הנמצאים בעולם אבל לא האח שלא היה בעולמו. והנה אמ' העוד לי בנים במעי ללמד כי הוא על דרך תימה<sup>14</sup>. 14. ותשאנה קול ותבכינה עוד. זה שאמר ותבכינה עוד סמוך אל הבכיה הראשונה. ואמר ותשק ערפה לחמותה, כי חפצה לשוב. וכן היה ויפקה, שנאמר הנה שבה יבמתך. ואמ' ורות דבקה בה, כי לא נפרדה ממנה ואמרה לא אניחך ואשוב. 15. ותאמר הנה יבמתך. ראה גודל חכמת נעמי כי הבינה מה שהיה בלב רות וגם הבינה לתחבולות ערפה, כי אמרה להן בתחלה העוד לי בנים במעי, ונתבאר לה מה שהיה בלב ערפה ויבמה. וכאשר ראתה כי רות לא שבה, אמרה נעמי בנפשה: אני גליתי מה שהיה בלב ערפה, בן אגלה מעתה מה שהיה בנפש רות מדרך אחרת. ואז אמרה לה הנה שבה יבמתך, כי נתאותה וחמדה להיות בבית עמה וגם ליבמה. לאלהיה הקדמונים. גם את ישובי לקדמתך קודם שתבואי בארץ ישראל ותשובי. ותתאו לעירך ולאלהיך. וזו דברה נעמי ברצו' לגנות ערפה, כי הוקלה ערפה בעיניה ואם עשתה חת כמו שעשתה ערפה, היתה עוד מננה אותה. יבמתך. לשון יחיד ויבמתך. נקרת. 16. ותאמר רות אל תפגעי בי. השיבה רות כהמתה כדרך ידברנה נעמי בעבור ערפה. וזה כתבה<sup>15</sup> תשובתה שאמרה על דרך גנאי בשביל<sup>16</sup> ערפה, ודברה לה שני המינים. הא' כי אני חפצת להיות עמך מאשר אחיה עם קרובי<sup>17</sup>. כי ארבע מלות זכרה רות, והם: אל אשר תלכי אלק, תליני אליך, תמותי אמות, ושם אקבר. וזה יודיע לאהבה גדולה כאהבת אם לבן. והרמוז הב' הוא תשובת דבריה שאמרה הנה שבה יבמתך אל עמה ואל אלהיה והיא אמרה: עמך עמי ואלהיך אלהי. ואמ' אל תפגעי בי. מענה: אל תתחנני לי בזה הדבר הקשה חמ' לי ואמרה אל אשר תלכי אלק. מענה: אל כל עיר שתלכי אלק, אם בעירך אם בזולתו. 17. ואמ' באשר תמותי אמות ושם אקבר. זה דברה על דעתה חוץ כי יהיה דבר אחר, כמו אונס או שביה או זולתו והפרידו שאין עליה דבר. ואמ' כה יעשה לי אלהים היא שבעת אלה, וזכרה קללות לנפשה ולא כתבם לנו הסופר. ואמ' כי המות יפריד ביני ובינך, נשבעה כי בראוני לא אפרד ממך חוץ שלא יהיה הדבר באונס. ואע"פ שלא באר לנו הכתוב האונס, אבל הדעת יחייב זה בעבור כי לא ידע האדם מתי ימות ולא אנה ימות. 18. ותראה כי מתאמצת. באמת נדע זה כי נעמי שמחה בדבריה, ואז שבחה לה. ואמ' מתאמצת ולא אמ' מתחזקת, כי האמוץ הוא יותר מן החזוק, שנאמ' חזק ואמץ. חזק בתחלה ואמץ אחר כך. 19. ותלבנה שתיים. נתנו פניהם לשוב אל בית לחם. ואמ' ותהום כל העיר. מענה: כל נשי העיר, כי אמר ותאמרנה והם הנשים. ואמר הזאת נעמי.

(<sup>12</sup>) A אמרה. (<sup>13</sup>) A אשר. (<sup>14</sup>) יחזקאל ל"ג כ"א. (<sup>15</sup>) A חסר: האמ'. (<sup>16</sup>) A תקותן. (<sup>17</sup>) A תמה. (<sup>18</sup>) B חסר: לעבור. (<sup>19</sup>) A וחשבי. (<sup>20</sup>) B כותבה. (<sup>21</sup>) B בעבור.

(<sup>22</sup>) A קרובותי.

פה

יחזק דוב מרקון

[ח]

הודיע כי היו נשים רבות יודעות לנעמי ועוד כי האשה בקיבוץ הלכה משם והי' עשר שנים.  
 20. וזת אמר אליהן: זה הדבר ממנה יודיע על ג' דברים. הא' כי זה שאמרו לה הזאת נעמי כי  
 נתפלגו בעת ישרא אהיה אך נשתנו מעשיה ואיך באו עליה יגזרות ומפיונות רבות. והב' כי  
 ישימה ידמה מן נעם כי היא הייתה מעונה בנעויות רבות. והג' שני העתק שמה אל מרת, שנאמר  
 קראן לי מרת, וגם נמצאנו בתי<sup>1</sup> קראן לו ויאכל להם<sup>2</sup>. ואמר קראן ומצאן ביטלש נקודות  
 ספרי אלף ישהוא כמו ששקצו וזו עמי ראמה כי נשתנו מעשיה וקבלה על נפשה לקראת לשמה  
 מרת. ואז בנו הנשים בבית גדולה בעת ששטעו זה הדבר ובעת שאמרה כי חמר ישרי לי  
 מאד כי זכרה ההפירות ישותה. 21. והוא שאמי אני מלאה הלכותי. כי היו לי בעל  
 ובנים ומעיונות רבות ורקם סביל דבר השינוי ה' ואמר וזה ענה בי כי נתנני אלמנה ואמי  
 וישרי הרע לי. כי כמו בני ואמי ענה בי העיד עלי, כמו עונית עני בני<sup>3</sup>, שקר ענה  
 באחוזי<sup>4</sup>, כי עונותי ענו בי לפני ישרי וזהם הגיטות להיות אלמנה וגם שכולה. 22. ותשב  
 נעמי, למעלה אפר ויהי כבאנה בית לחם להחזיר העת שבאו והוא שאמר בתהלת קצור  
 ישעורם, כי מצאו לחם לישבוע.

## ב.

1. ולנעמי מודע לאישה וגו'. זה הפסוק מוקדם לאשר יאמר מאחר כן. ולמדנו כי  
 דברים. הא' כי היה כעו ריני לאלסלך שנאמר מודע. ובעבור זה הניב לנעמי. והב' כי כעו היה  
 ממשפחת אליסלך ובעבור זה<sup>1</sup> לקח לזוה. והג' כי זכר שבו כי הוא נכבד מוקד בעל שם גדול  
 ישנו נכבד וזל. מראי<sup>2</sup> מרה אחד הם, אליף והוא ששטישין. מודע הוא שם מקור, כמו מושב,  
 מורא, מוצא, מורה. ופענה: בעל מודע, כמו תאמי בעל מושב. 2. ותאמר רות המואביה  
 אל נעמי אלכה נא השדה. ידעה רות כי נעמי לא תוכל לצאת ללכת כי היא זקנה וגם  
 ידעה כי אין להן דבר שיתכללו כמנו לכן היא צריכה לצאת כי היא בחורה וחוקה<sup>3</sup>. ולא היה  
 יבשר לה לצאת בלי רשות המלכה לכן ראתה שתק עצה ממנה ואמרה לה: לבי בתי. 3. ותלך  
 ותבוא ותלכט בישדה. מפני כי באה עם הלוקטים. ואמר אחרי הקצירים. הודיע כי לא  
 היתה פדוזה ולא גמלה כמו ישנו זה הלוקטים נכבס. ואמר ויקר מקרה. כי נקדה לה מקרה  
 כי באה שם. ולא פדוזה הלכה שם. כי היא לא היתה יודעת לבינו כי היא גיורת היתה ולא היא  
 נתקבר עמה אלא אז, אבל ה' הנהיגה והלכה אל השדה שלו לתת לחם לפניו. כי בן הבטיחה  
 ה', שנאמר ואמר גו וגו'<sup>4</sup>. 4. והנה בא סבית לחם וגו'. זה הפסוק מודע על שני דברים  
 א' כי הקוצרים הקדימו לנעמי כי הם השכימו על מהותם. והיה מקורו משקוף עליהם, כמו יאמי  
 טאחר כן ויען הנער הנעב על הקוצרים<sup>5</sup>. והב' שנדע איך היה פנהם בקריאת שלום כי היה  
 אומר: ה' עמכם, ועונה אותו הכבו: יברכך ה'. וכן אמר המלאך לגדעון: ה' עמך גבור החילי<sup>6</sup>.  
 וה' השלום היה לקוצרים כמו שידענו מן גרעון וכן נעמי בעי. ויש דרך אחרת על שלום הקוצרים  
 והוא כמו שאמר: ברכת ה' עליכם, אבל אל הפונעם זה לוח וחזאים את קרוביהם מרחק אומי:  
 שלום עליכם, שנאמר ואמר יתה לטשה: לך לישלום<sup>7</sup>. וישאלו איש לרעהו לישלום<sup>8</sup>. וגם יש על  
 השלום, שנאמר ואמר יתה לטשה: לך לישלום<sup>9</sup>. וגם מצאנו במקרא דרך קריאת שלום בעת  
 שיפחד איש לרעהו, אף כי פחדו ממנו. ואמר עמיני לדוד בעת שפחד מהם: שלום שלום לך ושלום  
 אל תיראו<sup>10</sup>. אף כי פחדו ממנו. ואמר עמיני לדוד בעת שפחד מהם: שלום שלום לך ושלום  
 לעוזד<sup>11</sup>. ואמר המלאך להנאל: שלום לך חזק וחוק<sup>12</sup>. ואם תאמר שזה שאומרי: ה' עמכם,  
 יברכך ה' הוא בעת הקוצרה ובעת המלאכות, אבותי כי דרך שלום לקוצרים הוא שאמר: ברכת ה'  
 עליכם, ברכנו אתכם בשם ה', אבל לא המנהג זה. 5. ויאמר בעז לנעמי הנעב על  
 הקוצרים. נדע מזה כי כעו לא היה לרוע כאשר היה יודע ללוקטים אשר יצאו מבית לחם

1 B דהם. 2 A חסרי: בתי. 3 שמות ב' כ'. 4 ירמיה י"ד י'. 5 דברים י"ט י"ח.

6 A חסרי: וה'. 7 שיר לעל א' כ'. 8 B זקנה. 9 דברים י' י"ח. 10 רות ב' ג'.

11 שופטים ג' י"ב. 12 שמות ד' י"ח. 13 בראשית מ"ג כ"ג.

14 דברי הימים א' י"ב י"ט. 15 דנאל י' י"ט. 16 בשני דב"י AB בשבט: חזק ואמץ.

וכאשר ראה אותה נכריה טבלם הפך לשאול לנערו בעבורה, שנאמר למי הנערה הזאת.  
6. ויען הנער הנצב על הקוצרים. נדע מזה כי הפקיד ישלו היה זרין, מהיר לא היה;  
כניה איש שיבוא ללקוט עד שידע מי הוא, או היה יודעו מתחלה או היה שואל לו עתה אז?  
הודיע לו ואמר נערה טואביה היא היטבה עט נעמי מישידי מואב. 7. ותאמר  
אלקטת נא ואספתי בעטרים. מענהו: מן העטרים, כמו אמר הם יאכלו בלחמם<sup>(1)</sup> ומענהו:  
מן לחמו. והם היטבליים הנופלים מן העטרים. כבר זה על דרך הטלה, כי היה מרחם אותה הפקיד  
וגם היה יודע כי בעז היה מרחם וחוטל, ואולי יעשה בה טובה. ואמר ותבא ותעמוד מאז  
הבקר. יודיע כי היה רואה אותה מחבקר עד עתה איך היתה מלקטת והיה מרחמה בלבו, כי לא  
היתה פרוצה עזה ללקט ורבה ולחטוף מיד האנשים. ואמר זה שבתה הבית מעט. יע' כי?<sup>(2)</sup>  
השעורים אשר לקטת הות מעט הוא לכזא אל המותה אשר היא יושבת כמית. וזה הקרוב.  
8. ויאמר בעז אל רות הלא שמת בת? כבר שמע בעז בעבור רות שמא אל בית  
לחם, כמו אמר מאד כן הגד הגד לי וגו', ואולם לא ראה פניה ולא ידע אותה עד שאמר  
לו פקידו נערה טואביה היא וגו'. וכאשר ראה כי היא היא או הכניחה לעשות עמה חסד. ואמר  
הלא שמת. יחפון תוספת. והוא הלא חייב לך שתקבלי מן דברי מה שאני אומר לך. דא  
הלא קבלת ושבעת הדבר חמותך ובאת, ועתה שמעני שאומר לך, והוא לא תלכי ותלקטי בזולת  
בית. לחם ותרחקי מן מקומך. וגם לא תעבורי מה היסדה שלי אלא כמו יעשית ולקטת מן שדה  
שלי, מן אחפון שתעשי תמיד שתתחברי עם נערותי ולא תצאי מהנה. 9. ואמר עיניך בשרה  
אשר יקצרוך. אם יקצרו בזה היסדה וילכו הקצרים שלי בשדה אחר שלי, לבי עמהם. ואמ'  
הלא צויתי את הנערים לבלתי נגעך. שאם לא אהיה אני בשדה או הפקיד שלי,  
בבר צויתי שאר הפקידים שלא יזיקך ותהי בהכסחה וכשילום. ואמר וצמית זה לכת. כמו  
ישראלני טנהנו מאד כן. לכן אמר אם תצמאי לבי אל מקום המים שלי ותשתי ולא תצמאי  
לחביא מים מביתך. ואמר ובה תדבקין עם נערתי.

שאלה. מה צורך והועלה היו עשות נערות בעז בשדה?

תשובה. כי היה לבעז פקידים אנשים מופרדים מפקידים משיקים הקוצרים ויראו כצרכם והיה לו  
גם נערות בקורות על הנשים המלקטות או על הקוצרות שלא יבא ביניהם מריבה ובהלקות, יע'  
שלא תזיק זאת המלקטת לחברתה. והיו נערות בעז יושבות להן.

שאלה. בעז אמר ובה תדבקין עם נערותי, ורות דברה לנעמי: כי אמר אלי עם הנערים  
אשר לי תדבקין, ולא אברה: עם הנערות.

תשובה. כי בעז גם דבר לה עם הנערים אשר לי תדבקין, וקצרו הסופר ובארו בדבר רות  
ואמר: אשר יקצרוך; מע' אשר יקצרו הקוצרים.

ואמ' והלכת אחריהן, ישוב אל הנערות. ואמ' נגעך. מע' להזיקך כמו<sup>(3)</sup> הנגע  
באיש<sup>(4)</sup> הזה וגו', או הוא מכה מן נגע. ואמ' וצמית. ואמ' יחזיק חסד אליך והוא כמו אמ'  
מלו תוכך חסד<sup>(5)</sup> אשר הוא חסד אליך וצויו צמית בה' א'. ולו היה קצא באלף היה וצמאת,  
וקראת, ומצאת. תעבורי<sup>(6)</sup>. צויו<sup>(7)</sup> עבדך, כמו ישפוטו הם<sup>(8)</sup> צויו<sup>(9)</sup> שפוטו וכמוהו  
תשפוטו צויו שפוטך עבדך שם העבורה, ומע' לא יהיה לך העברה מן הנה. ואלקטת<sup>(10)</sup>.  
צויו לקט<sup>(11)</sup> וגם יעשה לקוט מצדד כמו יסור, קנא רפא, רדף, שנאמר ירדף אויב נפשי<sup>(12)</sup>.  
וזה שאמ' ואלקטת בישבליים<sup>(13)</sup> הוא מן לקט<sup>(14)</sup> מצדד והוא לקוט אלסט בישבליים. ואמר מודע  
לאישה<sup>(15)</sup>. בענה בעל מודע, כמו אמ' ימים ירכו<sup>(16)</sup>, מענה: בעלי ימים יכריז. ואמ' ועד  
עתה<sup>(17)</sup> ולא אמ' עתה, כי הטלה לא היתה מוכרתה מאשר לפניו ולא מאשר אחריה, אלא היא  
סמוכה לפניו ולאחריה. 10. ותפל על פניה ותשתחו ארצה. כאשר שמעה כי בשרה

A א. ויקרא כ"ב י"א. B ב. ו. רות ב' י"א. B ב. נס לו.

A א. מוספים: אל; אולם המלה הזאת אינה בהחזוק בתורה. BA ב. בשבט: ובאיש.

A א. בראשית כ"ו י"א. B ב. יחזקאל כ"ה מ"ז. B ב. ש"י. שייך להפסוק הקודם.

A א. צויו. שמות י"ח כ"ו. A צויו. A א. שייך להפסוק ב'. A א. לקוט.

A א. תהלים ד' י"ו. רות ב' ב'. A לקוט. A א. שייך להפסוק א'. A א. שייך להפסוק ו'.

בהבטחות האלה נפלה על פניה ותשתחוה<sup>(1)</sup> לה' על דרך שבח, כמו עשה עבד אברהם. אחרי כן אמרה לבעז: אי אדוני, מה דבר ראית בי כי מצאתי חן בעיניך ואני עם כל זה נכריה מכם. והראתה לו כי אני מגדלת זה הדבר שדברתי לי והבטחתני ואני איני כדאי<sup>(2)</sup> וראויה בזה. ואחר כך הודיעה בעז כי ראויה: כי את בעלת חסד. 11. ויען בעז ויאמר לה הגד הגד לי וגו'. וזכר לה שלשה חסדים אשר עשתה אחר ביות בעלה ובך אותה בעבור זה, ולא זכר לה החסד אשר עשתה עם בעלה בחייו, כי כבר ערפה היתה כמות בזה הדבר. החסד הא' כי הלכה אחרי נעמי ונתחברה עמה אחר שנתיאשה מן בעלה והיתה מתעצבת ביגונותיה עמה ובעניותיה ויצאה ולקטה והביאה לה לאכול<sup>(3)</sup> והיתה חשוכה בעיניה כאמת, וזה שבה לכלות. לכן אמר כל אשר עשית את<sup>(4)</sup> חסותך. וחשני כי נתפרדת מן קרוביך ומן מקומך ומביתך ובאת בארץ נכריה במקום עמר הדת, כמו שעשה אבינו אברהם אשר הניח יולדיו וקרוביו בעבור אהבת הדת. והג' כי באה בכלל ישראל ותהיי גיורת בעיניהם. 12. ואמר ישלם ה' פעלך אשר עשית עם חסותך טובות וחסדים. ואמר ותהי משכרתך שלמה. ישלם לך שכרך בעולם הבא כי באת בדת האמת, כי אמר ותלכי אל עם אשר לא ידעת<sup>(5)</sup> ואמר לחסות תחת כנפיו. ודע כי אמר ישלם ה' פעלך הוא שכר פעלך. ואמר מעם ה' אלהי ישראל. כי באת בדת והיטיב לבה בזה הדבר. 13. ותאמר אמצא חן בעיניך אדוני. מענה: הנה אנכי מוצאת חן בעיניך, כי נחמתי וחסמת לבי עוד בדברים כי התפללת בעבורי, כי בלא ספק תפלתו מקובלת היתה. וזה שאמר אמצא חן הוא על דרך ספור. דא הפצה בזה להיות תמיד זכורה לפניו ולא ישכח אותה ועזובה<sup>(6)</sup> כי כבר הוא נרצת בעיניו. ואמר ואנכי לא אהיה. איני ראויה להיות כאחת שפחתך אלא פחותה. ואתה הבטחתני בכל טובה. 14. ואמר ויאמר לה בעז לעת האכל. כאשר בא עת האכילה קראה לאכל עמה, כי היה נדיב לב יפה עין במטונו ובמאכלו כמנהג אבותיו הקדמונים החסידים, ולכן במחה בו וישבה ואכלה, כי נתיארה שמה יכעס עליה אם לא תאכל. אמר ויבבלת פתך בחטין, כי היה קיץ והוא והביאו לה חטין לשבול פתה בחטין והעקק במים סומך קלי לקרר נופה ואמר ותשב מצד הקצרים, כי לא היה חק לישבת אם האנשים. והביא הנה ענין שקר ההן והכל היופי אשה וגו'<sup>(7)</sup> וענין פרות הבשן וגו'<sup>(8)</sup>, יען כי גבחו בנות עין<sup>(9)</sup>, והיו למתפרזות במדות<sup>(10)</sup>. ואמר ויצבם לה קלי. לקחה שבלים וקלם באש ושרפה ואכלה. דא ויצבם. מית ספלי<sup>(11)</sup>, והוא כמו ויצב לה קלי. זה הוא קלי משעורים וישחנום עב ויתנום בקערה וישפך מים עליו ויצבת ויעלה למעלה ויאכל ממנו. ושרם שישפוך מים עליו יקרא כרטל. והודיע כי הציב לה קלי ורבה ואכלה וישבעה ותשאר לה מן הלחם וכן הקלי. 15. ותקם ללקט. אחר שאכלה כהרה בטלאתה, וצוה בעז לעריו בשני דברים. הא' גם בין העפרים וגו' והב' וגם שול תשולו וגו'. ולא זה ראוי לכל לוקט ועני, כי כל אחד ואחד טלקט יהמול עליו בכבודו, ולכן אמר גם בין העפרים תלקט. ואחר כן זכר מה שראוי לטלקט, והוא שאמר ועזבתם ולקטתם וגו'. והוסיף לה על זה גם בין העפרים תלקט, יענה: הניחוה ללקט שבלים אשר הם בין העפרים, כי מנהג הקוצרים שאם יקצרו עפרים וחפצו לעשות אלוטות ואחר כן יתנום ערמות ערמות ויפלו מידיהם שבלים ואום שיעהה<sup>(12)</sup> ליקח אלו השבלים. 16. ואמר של תשלו לה מן הצבתיים. הם עפרים נשואות זה על גבי זה כמו ערמות, והיו כהם שבלים שיוציאו<sup>(13)</sup> ראשיהם מבין העפרים וצום שישולו אותם ויוציאו מים ויתנום לה בעבור שיבוא לה הועלת הרבה. וזו הצווא שבעה רות. של תשלו. מן של נעליך<sup>(14)</sup>. צבתיים הוא לישון<sup>(15)</sup> רבים, ויחיד צבת, ותיז הוא במקום הא. ונקראו צבתיים, כי הם עפרים זה על גבי זה צבתיים ונפוחות. 17. ואמר זיהי כאיפה שפרים. וזה זולת מה שנתנו לה הנערים, שנאמר ותחבט את אשר לקטה וגו'. 18. ואמר ותתן לה את אשר הותרה משבעה. תוסיף מלה את אשר הותרה מאחר שבעה. 19. ואמר ותאמר לה חמותה איפה לקטת היום וגו'. מענה: עם מי לקטת. ואמר ואנה עשית. אנה חבטת<sup>(16)</sup> והכנת אותו. דא בשדה אחד

(1) A והשתחויה. (2) B כרי. (3) B לובל. (4) BA בשכוש: עם. (5) רות ב' י"א.  
(6) A יעורה. (7) משלי לא' ל'. (8) עמוס ד' א'. (9) ישעיה ד' מ"ז. (10) יחזקאל י"ג י"ח.  
(11) B תפל. (12) A שיעהה. (13) A שיוציאים. (14) שמות ג' ה'. (15) A לעולם. (16) B הבטחת.

אזן עשית או בשרות דבתי. ואמר יחי' מכירך ברוך. התפללה בעדו ולא היתה יודעת מי הוא כי עשה חסד גדול וחובה, קיים שאמר חתוב ואהבתם את הגר' ואמר ותגד לחמותה את אישר עשיתה עמו ותאמר וגו'. בעדו אמרה לה, כי האיש אישר ברכת שמו בעו. 20. ותאמר נעמי לכלתה. אמרה מתחלה: יהי מכירך ברוך, קודם שתדע אותו, ואחר כך שירעה אותו עוד אמרה: ברוך הוא לה, ואמר אישר לא עזב חסדו. ישוב אל ה' אל ה' ית'ש או ישוב אל בעה. ואמר את החיים'. ישוב אל נעמי ואל רות. ואמר ואת המתים. וזה יודיע כי בעו עשה חסד ואמת עם אלימלך וכניו, והם המתים, במענה כי הוא עשה חסד עם נעמי בעבור המתים. והודיעה כי הוא סרובנו והוא גואל, שנאמר קרוב לנו האיש וגו'. ואמר מגאלנו הוא. אחר שאמר קרוב לנו האיש' להודיע כי הוא משיפחת אב ולא משיפחת אם וילמדה אותה כי בעו עשה עמך חסד בעבור ב' דברים. הא' כי רות היתה צדקת ועשתה חסדים לנעמי, שנאמר הגד הגד לי וגו', והב' כי נתחברה עם נעמי והיתה נעמי קרובה בעו. 21. ותאמר רות המואבית גם וגו', כאשר שמעה כי ברכה אותו בעבור שעשתה עמו חסד יום אחד, אחר כן הודיעה אותו כי הוא חייב לי ללכת בשרותי תמיד עם נערותי עד אישר יכלו השעורים והחטים. 22. ותאמר נעמי אל רות כלתה טוב בתי. כי טובה עצה דבר לך בעו שתחיי עם נערותי, כמו אמרו לך ובה תדבקין עם נערתי'. ואמר ולא יפגעו כך בשרה אחר. מע' שלא יזיקו וירעו לך בבקשם אחר'. ואמר בשרה אחר, ולו' אמר בשרה אחר, זה ישוב אל האיש אישר הוא אחר, שנאמר שרה, וכאשר יאמר בשרה אחר', ישוב חסדה בעצמו. 23. ותדבק בנערות בעו. הודיע כי קבלה רות דבר בעו ודבר חמותה ולא סרה טעם עד שכלו הקצירה. ובלא ספק כי בעו היה ישוב לה במנהג יום ראשון, ולא הלכה אל מקום אחר. וכאשר שלמה, אז במהרה ישוב עם חמותה לחיות צנועה ומסותרת.

## ג.

1. ותאמר לה נעמי חמותה בתי וגו'. כאשר שבה ליטבת עמה אז נפלה בלב נעמי עצה ואמרה בלבה כי בעו הוא ודאי יעזור לרות בעבור להנשא לאיש, ואז הקדישה לה דבר ואמרה: אז בתי, הלא יש לי עתה כבה זמן שאני מבקשת לך בנות, יע' אני מחשבת בלבי על אי זה האיש תוכשרי להנשא, ועתה הנה ידעתי כי בעו הוא אישר יעזור לך וקבלי מה שאני מצוה לך, ואמר אישר ייטב לך, כי לא אחפזין כי אם להיות את בטובה עמו. 2. ועתה הלא בעו מדעתנו. חזית הדבר הוא על הנה הוא זרה. ואמר זרה. ויעל לנו שני דברים. הא' כי היא היתה מתחלה מחפשת דרכי בעו עד שידעה כי בן הלילה ללכת רות אליה. והב' יודיע לנו דוב תבואות יבכך ה' לישראל בזה השנה, כי בעו לא היה יכול לזרות לשעורים עד שכלה מן קציר החטים. ויקרב כי הוא זמן כמנהג שדברה התורה באספק מנחך וטיקבך'. אמר מדעתנו. ישם מקרה מודעה מושעה. מדעתנו. מושעתנו מקרה גם מדעתנו מקרה. 3. ואמר ורחצת וסכת. ידעה נעמי כי בעו ראה אותה פעמים רבות ולא עשתה זאת'. בעבור להגביר יצור ולפתותו, אלא כן היה מהג הראשונים שישימו לכל מלאכה ומלאכה קשות ומלבוש, שאם תהיה אישה רועה או מלקטה תלבוש בגדים שיכשרו לזו המלאכה, כי היא עושה מלאכות ומחוללת'. בפני הכל במאמץ וביציאתה, והכל רואים אותה ולא יבשר לה ללבוש בגדים נאים ויפים. וכאשר בקשה רות להנשא לאיש למשה מלבוש שיכשר לזה המעשה כמו שעשתה תמר ותכס בצעיף וגו'. וכן עשתה רות כי למשה בגדים יפים וסוכה'. כי היא מבקשת גואל וכמה אליו בעצמה ולא שלחה שליח בזה המענה, כי היא כבר היתה מוטחת בו ולא היתה מתבישת ממנו, כי דבר לה מתחלה דברים טובים, והיה רואה אותה תמיד ומדבר עמה כי הוא זקן חסיד היה,

(1) B ויהי. (2) דברים י"ט. (3) B בטעיה: את אשר עשה עמה.

(4) B חסד: ישוב אל ה' ית'ש או ישוב אל בעו ואמר את החיים.

(5) רות ב' ה'. (6) חסד: מע' שלא יזיקו וירעו לך במקום אחר. (7) A ולא.

(8) B חסד: זה ישוב אל האיש אשר הוא אחר, שנאמר שרה, וכאשר יאמר בשרה אחר.

(9) דברים מ"ו י"ג. (10) B זי. (11) B ומחוללת. (12) בראשית ל"ח י"ד. (13) B ומיכה.

(יב)

יצחק דוב מרקון

פט

ולכן באה אליו על מנהגה ועוד כי לא היתה מאמנת, כי אולי לא ידע השליח לדבר בטוב ויסדר דבריו בתקון, ולכן הלכה שתשמע מה יעבור ביניהם ותעשה. וי"א כי הפצה שלא להשמע הדבר בטוב הנואל, ואולי השליח היה מגלה לזה הסוד בטוב, ועוד שאם יחפץ בעו לקחתה לא ישמע הדבר ותתבייש. ועוד כי האיש מתבייש מן בעל הדבר ויעשה שאלתו ולא יתבייש מן השליח שלו כאשר יטהר צורך המבקש בראות פני איש. ואמר וישמח שם לתיך עליך. אלה הבגדים כרתה לה עתה הריסים או שאלה בשאלה מן הנישים או אשר חזו לה הראשונים בעת חי מחלוק, ואמר אל תודעי לאיש וגו', לאיש הוא בעו, בעבור שלא יראך ויתעסק לבו בדברים וגם יהיה לבו טוב בלא מחשבת. ואמר נסכת ולא אמר נסכת כמו אמרו ושמח שם לתיך עליך, כי זה נסכת סמוך אל ורצת הנזכר לעיל, מעי: בעת שתרחיק תסוך. 4. ואמר ויהי בי שכלבו וגו', ללמד כי לא היה עמו איש בשיכבתו, כי לולי זה היתה מתביישת לקרב בו בפני איש. ואמר וגלית מרגלתי וישכבת, מענה וגלית פניך כעש שתשכבי אצל מרגלותיו, כי לא יסור לגלות לבגדיו או למצעו, אלא הלכה עד הגרן והסתירה<sup>(1)</sup> פניה ובאותו המקום גלתה פניה. ואמר והוא יגיד לך. יש הנה דברים סתורים שצותה לה חמותה ולא פירש ולא באר לנו הכתוב מה הם הדברים. ואמרה לה, אם תאמרי לו כזה הדבר והוא יגיד לך כאשר תעשי, וכל מה שיאמר אליך עשי. 5. ותאמר אליה כל אשר תאמרי אלי אעשה. יודיע כי קבלה דבריה כמו שהיתה מתנהגת עמה מתחלה לכבדה ולשמע דבריה. 6. ואמר ותרד הגרן וגו', הוא שאמר הרצת וסבת וגו', ואלה בלב שיעשתה קודם ותרד הגרן, ויש אומ' כי זה שאמר ותעשי הוא שאמר ובאת וגלית מרגלותיו. ולא כן הוא, כי הפסוק שאחריו יסבר זה הפתרון. 7. והוא שאמר ויאכל בעו וישתה. לכן פתרת ותעשי הוא שרצת וסבת קודם שתתד הגרן. אמר בלאט כמו אמר בלתיים, והוא שאמרה אל תודעי לאיש. אמר ותגל מרגלותיו. גלתה רגליו למען להשיב ויקץ משנתו, ולא יראה זה הפתרון ותגל עם וגלית מרגלותיו. 8. ויהי בהעי הלילה וגו', כי מי פשתה רגליו ונגעו בדבר ויחרד, כי לא היה המנהג לישכב איש עמו ופחד. ואמר וילפת. הכיט מהנה וחפש מי הוא במרגלותיו ואז ראה דמות אישה כי ראה קשוח בגדים ועטור בשימים וכן רח הבשרים וכן שלבושה היתה ולא היה יודע מי היא, אם אחת מנערותיו או נכריה, ואז שאלה מי היא. וילפת. כמו ילפתו אריות דרכם<sup>(2)</sup>. 9. ויאמר מי את. מכתה. ומצאתי אמר בענין דבקה בת מי את<sup>(3)</sup> סמוך והוא למענה כי בעו אמר בת מי את וכרת הדבר והשיבה לו דות ולא זולתה. וזה לאליעזר כלו בדבורי מתחלה ועד סוף, שנאמר ותאמר בת בתואל אנכי וגו' ואשים הנז וגו'. ותאמר אנכי רות אמתך וגו'. מענה: תקחי לאישה, כי אמר למטה כי נואל אתה. וכן אמר גם הוא לבלתי לבת אחי הבחורים וגו'. 10. ויאמר ברוכה את לה בת, כי בקשה להקים זכר לבת מחלוק, ואמר חסדך האחרון מן הראשון, כי חסד גדול תעשי למת יותר מה שעשית מן הראשון אשר היית עמו בכשרות ובאמונה ומאשר שמעת לחמותך. וי"א רצית בזקן, וראשון אשר עשתה עם חמותה. וי"א שכבת הנז מן הראשון שלא הלכת ללקט בשדה אחר וקבלת על נפשך זה בחסדך. והראשון הוא הקרוב. ואמר לבלתי לבת אחי הבחורים, יעיל לנו ג' דברים. הא' כאשר דברתי למעלה, וחב' כי בעו היה זקן, והג' הוא כאשר הבחור יבקש נערה, כן מנהג הנערה לבקש בחור. וזו רות היתה צדקת רצתה בזקן חסיד ולא בבחור. 11. ואמר ועתה בתי אל תיראי זה יודיע כי בעו ידע<sup>(4)</sup> כי כל האנשים מתאווים כל אחד ואחד ליעהנה. ואמר כי יודע כל שער עמי. אמר לה כי אנשי העיר ככם יודעים כי את אישת חיל וכל אחד וא' יתאוה ליקחך וגם אנכי מתאוה כך. 12-13. ועתה כי אמנם כי גאל אנכי<sup>(5)</sup>. השיב לה תשובה שאמרה לו למעלה: כי גואל אתה. ואמר לה אולם אם תחפצי בעבור גואל הנז יש גואל קרוב ממני ולא יכשר לא לי ולא לזולתי לישאך, אלא אחד שישמע הגואל ההוא ממך, שנאמר ואם לא יחפץ לגאלך וגו'. גם נעמי ידעה כי כן הוא, ואולם אמר והוא יגיד לך שיעזרך בזה הדבר ויטהר בכל מאורו לקבוץ הזקנים כי היא אישת אוהבת היות, ואחר כן אמר לה אל תחשבי בלבך כי אם ימנע ממך הוא גם אני אמנע. לא,

(1) היתה סתרה. (2) איוב ו' י"ח. (3) בראשית כ"ד כ"ג מ"ו. (4) B הרביר.

(5) בראשית כ"ד מ"ו. (6) A חסר: כי בעו ידע. (7) B בשבוש: אתה.



כי אני שמח מאד בזה הדבר. ואחר נשבע לה שימחר בזה הדבר וישלימנו שנא' וגאלתיך אנכי. ואמר שכבי עד הבקר. ד"א אמר לה ליני הלילה שלא תחרד היא ותתבייש בעת שראתה אותו כי חרד. ואחר כן אמר לה שכבי עד הבקר לימח' לה ולחשיב לכה שלא להתעסק במחשבות, כמו יאמר אומר: אי בחיך, אני אעשה כל אשר תחפין והטב ולא תתעסק במחשבות. אמר לנאלך, הוא יבוא מן מצדד אשר הוא גואל, כמו קקרבכם מן קרוב אשר הוא מצדד. 14. ואמר ותשכב מרגלותיו עד הבקר. ודע כי בקר הוא תחלת עלות השחר, שנאמר ותקם בשורם יכיר איש רעהו. וסוף הבקר הוא הנין החמה. ואמר אל ירדע כי באה האשה הגרן, שלא ירדע הדבר וישיג בטוב ויחיה זה הגרסת מניעתו טענה כי לא הלכה אליו והלכה אל בעל. 15. ואמר הכי המטפחות, ראה נדבת לבו כי לא הפין לשוב אל נעמי דקם ומרד לה ישיש יעורים והשיאם עליה. ואמר ישיש יעורים. אין הם כילג כי לא יכיל הרדיר שלה, אלא הם כמו כי כילג רביעית, ואמר יעורים. כי באותו הגון לא היה כי אם יעורים, כי הוא היה זורה גין היעורים וגתה<sup>(9)</sup> יעורים זרו, שנאמר לישכב בקצה הערמה<sup>(10)</sup>. ויש אומ' כי מרד ישיש יעורים בעבור להוציא המעשר שלם. ולא הוא קרוב עט. ואמר ויבא העיר. הוא בעל. הניח עסקיו ובא בעתו אל העיר לצרכה. ואפילו אם היה יקחנה אלא טוב. ואע"פ כן יסדר בכל צרכה בין שיקחנה טוב ובין הוא, כמו נשבעי<sup>(11)</sup>. לה. אמר קבי צווי קבה, קבו לדכים, קבי תני; ד"א קבי מצדד נתן תתן ואלף חסד. ד"א קבה צווי כמו קבה את אישת<sup>(12)</sup>, והבי לשון נקבה ואמר ואחיו בה, ולא ואחיו, כמו אחיו לנו ישעלים<sup>(13)</sup> וכמו אהבו את ה'. ויכשר כי בא אחיו אשר הוא מצדד, כמו ואישקלה, בן זה ואחיו בה. מצדד אחיו תאחוז. 16. ואמר ותבוא אל חמותה ותאמר מי את בתי. כי רות דפקה לדלת, ואמרה נעמי מי את בתי. וקצרו הסופר לומר כי אני רות. ד"א מי את בתי, מענהו: את אלמנה היית או הוישלם<sup>(14)</sup> לך שחפצת והיגדת<sup>(15)</sup> לה אשר הבטיחה האיש. שנאמר ותגד לה וגו'. ואמר את כל אשר עשה לה. הוא אשר הבטיחה<sup>(16)</sup>. ואמר עשוה. כי הבטיחה דבר אמת והוא כמו עשה. הלא תראה כי מהר בדבר ולא אחר. 17–18. ותאמר ישיש היעורים האלה וגו'. ותאמר שבי בתי וגו'. ואמר איך יפל דבת. אם יתכן מן טוב או מוטב. ואמר כי לא ישקט האיש. כי אני יודע הסודות וגרבותי<sup>(17)</sup> ולא יתאחר. ומהרה נעמי בזה הדבר לר' דברים. הא' בעבור להוציק לרות מעצבה ולשמחה באיש, כמו אמרה בתי הלא אבקש לך מנוח<sup>(18)</sup> וגו'.<sup>(19)</sup> והבי כי אולי יתנה ה' בן ויקום בשם בנה המת, אבל בעו אהב בדבר הזה למרד בעבור חסד לא על דבר אחר. ולו היה עושה בעבור אהבת הוויג היה יקה אישה מן קרובותיו מבני אבות גדולות וכן עשירים גדולים ולא היה יורווג בגירות ענייה. ורות הצדקת עשתה כל אלה כי היתה הפצה לחיות עם חמותה על כל פנים אשר תפנה לה והיתה מקבלת דבריה לשמח לב נעמי, כי אני מקיימת וברוך. וכל זה טרוב אהבתה לה לתת לה הפצה.

## ד.

1. ובעז עלה השער וישב שם. ישב בשער כי לא יתכן זה אלא בשער המשפט. ולא דבר אלא עד שעבר טוב, וכאשר עבר מוב אמר לו: סורה יסבה פה, יע': בא ושכ<sup>(20)</sup> עמו. ואמר פלגי אלמני. הוא טוב, שמו וכניו. או היה שמו האחר ויחסו<sup>(21)</sup> אצל הדור אשר ידע<sup>(22)</sup> ממנו. ד"א שב הנה עד שיבוא הוקנים הפלונים, והם וקני העיר אשר בשמם. ואמר ויסר וישב. קבל דבריו טוב ולא הלך לדרכו. וזה מגודל צדקתו<sup>(23)</sup> ומנהגו הטוב. ואמר ויסר צווי חסד, כמו קשע, קשב. ולא אמר ויסר שיהיה צווי סור, והוא כמו נרדם וקשע<sup>(24)</sup> צווי קשע

(9) B חסד: לשמה. (10) B ויתנה. (11) רות ג' ד'. (12) B נשמע. (13) B בראשית כ"ט כ"א. (14) שיר השירים ב' ט"ז. (15) תהלים ל"א כ"ד. (16) B השלם. (17) B והגיד. (18) B חסד: האיש שנאמר ותגד לה וגו'. ואמר את כל אשר עשה לה. הוא אשר הבטיחה. (19) B בשני הב': הסודות וגרבותי. (20) A מנוח: B מ'. (21) רות ג' א'. (22) A וישב. (23) B ויחסו. (24) B יורע. (25) A צדקותו. (26) שופטים ד' כ"א.



הישרה מיד נעמי ומיד רות, ראוי והייב לך שתקח גם לרות שיירש הבן אישר יבא ממך לזה הישרה. וכן תאמר קנותך הישרה מיד נעמי ומאת רות המואביה אשת המט קנית. לאישה, יע' קנית לאישה<sup>6</sup>. ואמר יש המט, כי הבן אישר יבוא מן רות יהיה במקום המט ויקח כלל הנכסים, כי הוא כמו בן, ואין מע' כי ראוי להקרא בני הובם בשם<sup>7</sup>. המט, כי זה עובד נקרא ולא מחלוק. 6. ויאמר הגאל לא אוכל לגאול לך, מע' לא אוכל ליקח לרות שלא אישיות את נחלת, ועתה גאל לך אתה את גאלתי, מע' קח אתה לשרה כי אני לא אוכל לגאל הישרה<sup>8</sup>. אלא בלקיחת רות, ועתה לא אוכל. ואמר לא אוכל ייתי פעמים. הא' ברות, והב' בישרה. ד"א הפסוק כלו אמר ברות. וזה ישאמר לא אוכל הראשון הוא מניעתו מנפשו, והשני הוא חוב<sup>9</sup>. לבעז. ואמר לו לך ראוי והייב ישתגאל, כי לא אוכל לגאול אני, ואתה גאל אחרי ואין לך מניעה כמו ישרה לך. ואמר פן אישה הית את נחלת, כי טוב חלק נכסיו לבניו ונצל<sup>10</sup>. מן עסק לבן ואמר עוד אם אקח לרות ויבא לי בן ממנה הוא יירש כאשר בני, ואין לי דבר לתת, ואיני עוד ואישה הית מה ישרה שתי לבני, כי ישובו מתחלה ויחלקו שיה בשרה. וזה הדבר קרוב עמי. ד"א טוב היה עני וידע כי לא היה יוכל ליקח לרות, אלא אם לא יקח מהלואה או ימכר דבר מנחלתו, כי עליו היו מפים ובנות הוא מכלכלם וגם לכלכל רות, ולא היה יכול לעמוד על זה הדבר שאם היה יקחנה היה ישהית נחלתו. ד"א ידע כי אישתו הראשונה לא תחפון בזה ותאמר לו גרשני ממך, כי לא ארצה בזה הצרה שלקחת, ויצטרך להשחית נחלתו ויבואו בסרימות ובמהלוקת גדולות. ואמר טוב לא אחפון ליקח לרות בעבור כי אני יסוג אותה או מבזה אותה, אלא מרוב דוחק ולא יכשר לי ישתגנה בפני ישראל ולא יהיה עלי חלון הנעל. וכבר אתם ידעתם המניעה שלי, וכל איש שימנע בדוחק לא תחלפון ולא תרוק, ואתה אין לך מניעה וקח לשרה עם רות. 7. וזאת לפנים בישראל. הקדים זאת ההקדמה ולמד כי זה שעשה טוב הוא מנהג ראשון שהיה בישראל קודם זמן משה, כי בן נתקבצו ורצו הדורות בזה הדבר להיות הנעל בקיץ ובשמועה כאשר רצו האנשים<sup>11</sup>. להיות גל ומצבה ואבנים עדים ביניהם<sup>12</sup>. כמו עשה לכן ויעקב לגל ומצבה והם אינם בעלי חיים. וזכר בזה הפסוק ג' דברים, והם: גאלה, תמורה, לקיים כל דבר. והגאלה היא גאלת בתים וישרות וכרמים ונשים, והתמורה היא כמו בעז אישר היה טוב גאל ונתחלף בעז במקומו. וגם יש תמורה הוא שיקנה איש דבר ויקדישו לבתן או לעניים ונעשה בה תמורה כי יכשר ליקח אותו בפדיון. ואמר לקיים כל דבר. הוא בנשיאת אישה חולתה, כמו איש שיחפון להפקיד פקידים ואפיטרופא<sup>13</sup> כי חייב המפקיד לשלף נעלו בפני עדים ויתנהו לו לקיים דבריו. ד"א לקיים כל דבר. הוא בגאולה ובתמורה לא וולתה, והראשון<sup>14</sup> קרוב עמי. וזאת התעודה בישראל. למד כי זה המנהג הוא עדות בישראל, יען כי זה המנהג היה תמיד מתנהג בישראל כמו מצוה. ד"א כי בזה המעשה יתכן העדות כי הוא כמו עדות על האיש אישר ישלף נעלו. 8. ויאמר הגאל לבעז קנה לך וגו'. 9. ויאמר בעז לזקנים. 10. וגם את רות המואביה וגו'. בעת שישלף טוב נעלו ונתן לבעז ידעו הישרים כי אישר היה ראוי<sup>15</sup>. לשוב נעתק לבעז, ואז אמר בעז לזקנים ולכל העיר עלי כי קנתי כלל ירושת המתים עם אשת מחלוקי, וידעתי מזה הפסוק דברים: הא' ראוי לאיש שיתחיל לעשות חסד בעת שיוכל להשיג ולא יעכב לנפשו אם ראה לזולתו<sup>16</sup>. כי מנע ממנו בעבור דוחק ואם טוולתו, והב' כי ראוי לומר מנפשו העידו עלי בכך וכן ויחיה האחד עומד ושותק ולא ימא<sup>17</sup>. והג' כי מנהג<sup>18</sup> המכר והקנין בכל האהוזות הם בחלוקה הכתמים, כי הישרות והנשים לא יקנו לבעליהן אלא בעדים ובכתב. שאם תחפש על עקר האהוזות תמצאם על ב' חלקים. הא' על מי שיחפון לקנות עבד ואישה ובתים וישרות וכרמים לא יקנו אלא בעדים ובכתב, שכל עת יבוקש עקר הקנין יוציא זה הכתב והעדים ולא יצטרך שמועה בזה הדבר. והב' כל מי שיקנה חיות וכלים והב' וכסף ומאכל ושתיה והדוטה להם הם יקנו לקניניהם בלא עדים

A חסר: יע' קנית לאשה. B בשם. A חסר: כי אני לא אוכל לגאל הישרה.

B בשבט: והא'. A חייב. B ונצל. A חסר: האנשים.

A חסר: והאבנים עדים ביניהם. A חסר: מוסף: הוא.

A חסר: ראוי. A לנפשו. A יקחה. B המנהג.

אג

יצחק רוב מרחקו

[טז]

ובלא כח אלא כהנן שניהם (ושקל מהו. ויצטרכו שבעה בזה הדבר בעת הלוקה). ויש לנו עוד  
 ב' אופנים בענין הנשים. הא' שאם נחשדה אישה בדבר אם הוא אמת או שקר לא תנצל אלא  
 בשבעה ואז תנקח האשה בעת שתשמה ב' שומה ולא יזיקה. והב' האשה שלא נמצאו לה  
 בתולים. אבל זאת אינה צריכה בשבעה. כי ה' יש נקומה ומדרתה עמה והוא דם בתולים. שאם  
 יאמר האיש ואקרב אליה ולא מצאתי לה בתולים<sup>(א)</sup> או אני ופרטו השמלה וגו'.<sup>(ב)</sup> ואם יהיו  
 לה בתולים תנצל ואם לא תהיה, ישאמר ואם אמת היה הדבר וגו' (והציאו את הנערה וגו').<sup>(ג)</sup>  
 והבמילים הוא כמו הכתב והעדים. ואם היתה מוכת עין ולא היו לה עדים כי הוכחה והיא נכסחה<sup>(ד)</sup>  
 לנפשה ותהיה רמה על צוורה. ועוד נלמד מזה הענין כי ראוי להחזיר בה ישקנה בן וכן לבאר  
 בפני העדים. אשר לזקנים וכל העם, כמו אשר למעלה נמר והזשנים וגור זקני עמי. אלה  
 מוקדם ומאוחר. ואשר עדים אמת היום. פעמים האחד בתחלת דברו והב' בסופו. והראשון  
 הוא עדות בעבור השדה והשני האחרון הוא עדות בלקיחת חות. ואין פה בן יעקרים העדים ובין  
 הדבר על העדים. אשר ב' קניית אית בל אישר לא יליט לך וגו' ולמעלה אשר הלקת  
 השדה אשר לאהני לאליפלך<sup>(ה)</sup> בעבור כי היה מחלוק וכליון דבר ירושה אשר לא ירשו מאביהם  
 אם ירושה מסקם אחר או מצאת. ד"א בתחלה היה לאביהם. ואחר בן ירשו אותו בגוי. והקדים  
 לכליון על מחלוק. ואף על פי שכליון הוא הקטן בעבור כי היה מחלוק. ואמר להקדם ישם המה וגו'.  
 ללמד כי אם יקח לרות יהיה ישם המה נשאר על נחלתו אשר הוא ביד בעו עד שיבוא הבן ויהיה  
 לו הנחלה. ואמר ולא יכרת. ישם המה מעם אחריו וגו'. הוא כמו אומרת השפעת מאן  
 יכני להקדם לאחיו שם בישראל<sup>(ו)</sup>. ואמר אשר לא יכנה את בית אדוני<sup>(ז)</sup>. ואם יאמר אומר כי זה  
 הענינה אין הוא מענין כי ישבו אדם אחד וגו'<sup>(ח)</sup>. כי לא זכר המה בלתי יכום וגם לא זכר שם  
 מלת נאחל. ואמר אבארי אותו כי אין בין שני הפעמים האלה פרק. כי לו אמר בענין כי ישבו  
 אדם נאחל יבוא עליה והוא יהיה מיכה היו העדות האסורות צחורות כדברך. כי אולי תהיה האשה  
 הזאת אשת בן דודו והוא נאחל לבן דודו ותהי יבמתו אחרת. וכן ישאר כל העדות. ולכן אמר  
 יכמה נא עליה<sup>(ט)</sup> ולא אמר נאחל. כי לא כל נאחל יבשר לו לבוא עליה הוא נכס. לכן כל נכס נאחל  
 לפני אחרת או עדות אחרת. אלא המדיב אשר הייב ה' לבוא עליה הוא נכס. לכן כל נכס נאחל  
 ולא כל נאחל יבשר. ואמר יכמה אשר יהיה עמך כמו אני אל אישה אחרת ובה איתק<sup>(י)</sup>. או  
 לא אבה בפני<sup>(יא)</sup>. ולא זכר המה מלת ויום וגם לא זכר בענין כי ישבו אדם מלת נאחל. וזה  
 הספר הוציא בלשון נאחל בעבור כי מתחבר עם לקיחת חות גם השדה. כי מלת יכום לא יכול  
 בישראל. אבל מלת נאחל יכול על עדות נשים יהודי. ואופן אחר כי לא היה לשחלוך וכליון נאחל  
 להאמר חות עליו להיות בדרך להחזיר בלתי יכום.

שאלה. למה לא זכר בזה הענין הלצה נעל כמו שיזכר בתורה.

תשובה. כי זה שאמר בתורה וחלצה נעלי<sup>(יב)</sup> הוא הייב והי<sup>(יג)</sup> הדבר בעת שאמר היום לא  
 הצפתי לקחתה ואין לו מניעה ורוחק. אבל טוב דבר לא הצפתי לקחתה והוא מניעתו באה<sup>(יד)</sup>  
 ונבורר כי מרוחק גדול עשה זה. כמו אמר פן אישה את נחלתני<sup>(טו)</sup> ובעבור זה לא הייב בו הלצה  
 נעל. ואם תאמר זה שאמר<sup>(טז)</sup> כי ישבו אדם יחדיו<sup>(טז)</sup> הם אדם כאמת. ואמר לך גם זה שאמר הנה  
 אישר לאחיו לאליפלך<sup>(טז)</sup> הוא אה אדם יחדיו<sup>(טז)</sup> והוא כמו אמר ויום השבת שני כבישים<sup>(טז)</sup> אשר הוא מוצא  
 הוא יוצא מכלל עדות אישר אחרת<sup>(טז)</sup>. והוא כמו אמר ויום השבת שני כבישים<sup>(טז)</sup> אשר הוא מוצא  
 מכלל לא הענינה כל מלאכה<sup>(טז)</sup>. אחרת יראך פרק בין שניהם משני פנים. הוא כי זה  
 שאמר ויום השבת לא ידמה לשאמר לא הענינה כל מלאכה. כי לא אמר ויום השבת  
 עשה מלאכה. אלא אמר לא הענינה כל מלאכה. כלל כל מענינה. ואחר בן אמר ויום

- |                    |                  |                    |                   |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ט ב שחלוך.         | ז דברים ב"ב י"ז. | ח דברים ב"ב י"ז.   | ט דברים ב"ב כ.    |
| ס דברים ב"ב כ"א.   | י B המשה.        | י חות ד' ג.        | י דברים ב"ה י.    |
| פ דברים ב"ה ט.     | י"ו דברים ב"ה ה. | י"ז שם.            | י"ח בראשית ל"ח ה. |
| י"ט דברים ב"ה י.   | י"י דברים ב"ה ט. | י"ב B חסר: וזה.    | י"ג A בשבט: באח.  |
| י"ד חות ד' ג.      | י"א חסר: שאמר.   | י"ג דברים ב"ה כ"ה. | י"ד חות ד' ג.     |
| י"ה ויקרא י"ח ט"ז. | י"ב במדבר כ"ט ט. | י"ד שמות כ' י.     |                   |

הושבת ימני כבשים וחסגיל והפריד להחזיר דבר אחד מוסגל. ומה נדע כי הוא יוצא מתחת שאמר לא תעשה כל מלאכה והוא פרט יוצא מן הכלל, אבל זה שאמר ערות אשת אחיך<sup>(1)</sup>, כי ישבו אחים יחדיו<sup>(2)</sup> לא ידמה לזה כי הוא בחלוף זה, כי זה שאמר ערות אשת אחיך עמדה לנו ראייה כי הוא אח מוסגל לא זולתו. ואין זה מנהג התנאים היוצאים<sup>(3)</sup> מכלל הראשונים. כי אמר בשבת לא תעשה כל מלאכה, אך וכיום הושבת ימני כבשים, ולא היו מלאכה אלא מצוה, כמו אמר כל מלאכה לא יעשה בהם. ומה לא אמר ערות אשת אחיך, אך כי ישבו אחים יחדיו להוציא מוסגל מן הכלל, כי זה שאמר ערות אשת אחיך הוא מוסגל וידוע כי הוא אח ממש, וזה שאמר כי ישבו אחים יחדיו והוא דבר כלל, כי מלת אחים יכול כלשוננו על פנים הויכח. וזה בחלוף ובהפך. ולא יכשר להוציא כלל מן מוסגל, אלא היה יעבור בדברך, אם יהיה כי ישבו אחים יוצא מן ערות אשת אחיך. אם לא היה כלשוננו ולא במצות אח זולת אח באמת. וכאשר מצאתי יחלק האח כל חלקים בשל ישיבה כי ישבו אחים באם תתני מן ערות אשת אחיך<sup>(4)</sup>. ואופן אחר, כי זה שאמר וכיום הושבת הוא דבר חובה וצוה, ומל מן שיחליף לזו המצוה חייב מיתה, כאשר חייב עושה מלאכה אסורה בשבת מיתה. אבל מן שיחליף למצות יבוס אין משפטו כמשפט מגלה ערות אשת אחיך, כי זה חוב וזה רשות. ואופן אחר כי ה' אמר ערות אשת אחיך וגו'. ואם תאמר כי הוא מחיים, הלא כל בעולות אסורות בחיים לבעלה. ועוד כי ה' אמר לאשת אח על האח תמיד לעולם בעילה<sup>(5)</sup>, כי אמר ערות אשת אחיך היא. והוא אחר מותו. ואין פרק בין הערות האסורות בחיים ובין אלמנות וגרושות. ואם כן<sup>(6)</sup> הוא לא יכשר בו לומר אם תתני כל עקר. וזה<sup>(7)</sup> ראייה גדולה. 11. ויאמרו כל העם אישר בישעיה הודיע כי כאשר העיד בעו לוקנים ולכל העם בעת שישלף מזה נעלו ונתן לבעו, כמו שכתוב למעלה, אז ענו כל הוקנים והעם ואמרו אנחנו עדים כך, ואחר כן התפללו בערו ואמרו לו יתן ה' את האשה וגו'. ד"א זה שאמר עוים הוא דבר חסופר כי כלל כל העם היושבים עם הוקנים אישר כלם היו עדים אמרו לו יתן ה' את האשה וגו' וברכוהו מהחלף בעבור רות. אחרי כן ברכוהו להרבות זרעו. ואמר ברחל וכל אה המשיגל בזה בעבור כי דברים. ה' הוא רבני המומות והנעיסות והבי יבוי הזרע, כי זה שאמר אישר בגו ישתיהם יכליל לבי דברים שאמרנו. ואמר ועשה חיל באפרתה. באר המענה שאמרו לו אישר בגו ישתיהם מן הכנים והעשר הם חזק בני אדם, כי הכן בה לאב. 12. ואמר ויהי ביתך. להחיות המשפחות שלך כמו פרץ, כי כמענה הראשון זכרו עקרי השבטים וכמענה השני זכרו בית פרץ, כי בעו מבניו היה ואשר אמר ילדה תמר, כי גם תמר אם אם של<sup>(8)</sup> בעו ומן בניו היה<sup>(9)</sup>. ואשר אמרו יתן ה' לך מן הנערה הזאת. כי המכה הזאת<sup>(10)</sup> תורה בזה שיתקן ה' מן רות. וזה הכנה היה להם לפרך בזה הדבר לחתנים. 13. ואמר ויקח בעו את רות ואמר ויתן ה' לה הריון וגו'. כי היתה עקרה עם מחלון וכאשר באה עם בעו נתנה הריון בעבור בעו ורות נעמי, כי זה הכן היה לשלשתם. ד"א נתנה ה' הריון באותה הלילה שבא<sup>(11)</sup> אליה. 14. ותאמרנה הנשים אל נעמי וגו' ואמר אישר<sup>(12)</sup> לא השבית לך גאל. מ' גואל קיים וחסיד כאשר היתה אוהבת. ואמר ויקרא שמו בישוראל. מ' יהיה לך שורות וגדולה וכבוד<sup>(13)</sup> ושם גדול, כמו אמר ויקרא בהם שמי וגו'. 15. ואמר והיה לך למשיב נפש. יתחך זה ממות בניך, כי בזה ישמע שמם ויהיה זה במקום ונחלתם. ודע כי יש אומרים כי הכן מן היבס הוא יירש לנכסי חמת. ד"א הקרוב של מת הוא כן מבית פלוני אשת פלוני, אבל לא יירש נחלת חמת. ואמר ולכלכל את שבתך. בעת זקנותך יכלכלך<sup>(14)</sup>, כמו שהיה בך מחליץ. ואמר כי כלתך אישר אוהבתך ילדתו. זה אמת דבר. כי רות היתה אצל נעמי יותר מבניה, כי נפרדה מקרוביה והלכה אחרי נעמי<sup>(15)</sup> בעבור אוהבת ה' ואהבתה. אמר אתך בך. לו היה צווי אהב היה אהבתך, כמו גמלתה, גמלתך. ולו היה פתרון

(1) ויקרא י"ח ט"ז. (2) דברים כ"ה ה'. (3) A הנמצאים. (4) A אבך. (5) B בעלה. (6) A בן. (7) B בזה. (8) B בזה. (9) B חסר: של. (10) B בניו היתה. (11) B זאת הכרחה. (12) B בשבוס: שבאה. (13) A בשבוס: ואשר אמר. (14) B חסר: וכבוד. (15) B ראשית מ"ח ט"ז. (16) B יכלכל. (17) A חסר: יותר מבניה כי נפרדה מקרוביה והלכה אחרי נעמי.

כמו אבותיך, היה אומר ב' נקודות אהבתך, כי מן אהבתך, תפצת, ורצה יבוא תפצתך ירצתך, כמו  
 ישפלת, ישפלתך, שפלתך, לכן צווי אהב לנקבה אהבתך<sup>(1)</sup> עבר כמו שפלתך, ואמר אישר  
 היא טובה לך משבעה בנים, כי כאשר היא אהבתך בן היא עמך טובה משבעה בנים.  
 וזה בחלוקה וזמן הרע שאמר בו בן מנבל אב וגו'<sup>(2)</sup>. ד"א מי היא טובה מ' בנים, מי היא טובה אהבתך  
 ומכבודת אהבתך. וזה שאמר מ' בנים וגם שאמר באלקנה מעשרת בנים אין הוא על המספר<sup>(3)</sup>, אלא  
 זה על<sup>(4)</sup> דרך עובר, כי זה שאמר מ' בנים הוא סוף המספר, כמו אמר עד עקרה ילדה שבעה<sup>(5)</sup>, אמללה  
 ילדה השבעה<sup>(6)</sup> וכן אלה בספ' וכמו זה הרבה. 16. ותקח נעמי את הילד. כאשר נפל  
 ממעי אמו לקחתו וגדלתו והיה עמה תמיד, ואמ' ותהי לו לאמנת, תמיד עד אשר נתגדל  
 הנער. 17. ותקראנה לו השכנות שם. דע כי ותקראנה הראשון הוא ותקראנה השני,  
 אבל הוסיף אותו כי האריך הדבר. ד"א כי ותקראנה הראשון<sup>(7)</sup> קראוהו בן נעמי, ותקראנה השני  
 קראוהו שמו עובר. ואמר הוא אבי ישי, ללמד כי עובר הוא אבי ישי ונשאר לו זה השם  
 לעובר תמיד ולא נתחלק, כי ישי שיקרא האב לשם בנו או אמו או יקראוהו איש נר, כמו השכנות  
 אשר קראוהו<sup>(8)</sup> עובר. ואם יהיה בדבוק הילדים לעולם לא יתחלק שמו. ואמר ילד בן נעמי.  
 יודיע חזק דברנו כי עובר יהיה לה במקום בנה. ואמר אבי דוד. השלים. והנה הפסק על דוד  
 הוא יודיע<sup>(9)</sup> במקרא, והוא תחלת המלכים שקמו מן יהודה ואחר בן יהודה כי הוא מן בני פרץ  
 בן יהודה, כי אמר ואלה תולדות פרץ, דע כי לא מצאתי במקרא יחוש מן ישראל שיהיה  
 שלם יודיע לנו הכתוב עד זמן הפסקת הנבואה וזאת כי משפחות, והם משפחות כהנים ומשפחת  
 מלכים מפני כי הם נבחרים מכל משפחות ישראל, והוא שאמר שתי המשפחות אשר בחרו בהם.  
 ואחר נבחר לכהנה, שנאמר והיה האיש אשר אבחר בו<sup>(10)</sup>, ואמ' ובחר אתו מכל שבטי ישראל  
 לי לכהן<sup>(11)</sup>. ודוד נבחר לגלובת, שנאמר ובחרו ה' אלהי ישראל בי מכל בית אבי<sup>(12)</sup> וכתוב ובחר  
 בדוד עבדו<sup>(13)</sup>. ודע כי הנה הזכיר יחוסו<sup>(14)</sup> מן פרץ עד שהגיע אל דוד ופסק עליה. ובדבריו  
 הימים<sup>(15)</sup> השלים יחוסו תמצאם כי הם ל"ח אבות; מזה נזכרו בזמן בית שני והם: אסיר,  
 ישאלתיאל, פדית, זרבל, הנני, שבתי, שמעיה, נעריה, אליעזר וכו'; ומן דוד עד יהויכין י"ח  
 ומן פרץ עד דוד עשרה בללם ל"ח. ואם תחשוב השנים מן פרץ עד שלמה תמצאם יטע מאות  
 פחות ד' שנים, כי היה לפרץ י' שנים על דרך קרוב בעת שהוליד לחצרון, והוא בן יורדי מצרים.  
 ויטעו במצאם ד' שנים ומן מצרים עד שנבנה הבית ת"פ שנה. ואם תחשוב מן פרץ עד נחשון  
 אישר הוא דור ה' תמצאם ד' שנים ומחשבו. ואם תחשוב מן נחשון<sup>(16)</sup> עד דוד הוא תיק שנים,  
 וזה יודיע כי שלמה הוליד לבנו באחרית ימיו, וכן עובר וכן ישי. והדורות האחרונים ישם י'  
 בבית שני<sup>(17)</sup> כתבום הנביאים חגי, זכריה ומלאכי, או מלאכי לבנו כתב. ולא ספר לנו הכתוב ארך  
 הזמן כמה היה ויקרב כי הוא נ"ד שנים על דרך קרוב. 18. ואלה תולדות פרץ. מ' זה  
 סמוך על ענין הזכורים בפרישת ויניש או הוא סמוך בענין יהודה בתמר, אשר הזכיר לאהרונה את  
 פרץ. והתחיל הנה בתולדות פרץ כמה שנים יש. ואע"פ שזה<sup>(18)</sup> בתורה וזה בחמש מגלות, אבל  
 מלם הוא מפי הגבורה ומזה הקדש נכתבו וכלם דברי אלהים חיים. ואמר תולדות. דע כי  
 מצאנו תולדות במקרא על ג' פנים. הא' בריאת הדבר מנפשו, כמו אלה תולדות השמים והארץ<sup>(19)</sup>  
 ואמר בטרם הרים יולדו<sup>(20)</sup>. והב' מקרה הדברים ומפורם והגרמות, כמו אמר אלה תולדות נח<sup>(21)</sup>,  
 אלה תולדות יעקב<sup>(22)</sup>. והג' הוא יחוס<sup>(23)</sup>, כמו ואלה תולדות פרץ. והרבה במקרא כמותו.  
 שאלה. למה התחיל מן פרץ הנה ולא התחיל מן יהודה.

(1) B אהבתך. (2) מיכה ד' ו'. (3) B מספר. (4) A חסר: על. (5) שמואל א' ב' ה'.  
 (6) ירמיה מ"ו מ'. (7) בראשית כ' ט"ז. (8) A חסר: ואמ'. (9) B מוסיף: כי.  
 (10) B שקראוהו. (11) A יודיעה. (12) במדבר י"ז ב'. (13) שמואל א' ב' כ"ח.  
 (14) דברי הימים א' כ"ה ד'. (15) תהלים ע"ה ע'. (16) B יחושו.  
 (17) דברי הימים א' י"ז כ"ד. (18) A מנחשון. (19) A חסר: בבית שני. (20) B שהיה.  
 (21) בראשית ב' ד'. (22) תהלים צ' ב'. (23) בראשית ו' ט'. (24) בראשית ל"ז ב'.  
 (25) B יחוש.

## יצחק דוד מירקון

צו

תשובה. להצאת בזה גדולת פרץ על דת. כי לו התחיל שהוא עקר, לא היה ידוע איזה הוא מבין נבבד, ובמו שוכותי בפתרון ויה ביהק וגו'. ואלה הוכחות בזה הענין יבשר כי) הכל היו נשיאים נבבדים, כמו פרישת בעני בעני, כי היה ראש נבבד, כי יהודה היה נבבד וזרעו אחריו תמיד נבבדים, שנאמר כי יהודה גבר באחיו וגו'. ובאשר בא זמן דוד נגלה להם עון המלכות ולא סרה המלכות מהם עד שנחשב המקריש. ואחר כך היה זרובבל נשיא בזמנו וזרע זרובבל נשיאים בזמן הגלות עד שיצלה הנבחר מהם, שנאמר לא יסור שבט מיהודה וגו'. ועליו אמר ולקחה אני מצבת הארץ, אבל אמר מצבת ללכד כי יקח לזרובבל והוא אשר לקחו בן הגלות אל וקח את צבת הארץ, אבל אמר מצבת ללכד כי יקח לזרובבל והוא אשר לקחו בן הגלות אל ויחלם ואמר מראש יקחונו דן אקטוקס, הוא בנו המשיח. הוא מכלל עניניו והוא הנבחר מהם, שנאמר אהבת צדק ותשנא רשע. ועליו אמר חגי הנביא עיה ביום ההוא נאם ה' צבאות אקח וזרובבל בן שאולתאל וגו'. והוא בן זרובבל ונקרא שמו כמו שנקרא בשם דוד, ככתוב ודוד עבדי נשיא להשי' לעולם, וכתוב ודוד עבדי יהיה לזרובבל וגו'. יקויים במהרה בזמנו וביוני כל עמי בית ישראל אמן ואמן, ברוך ה' לעולם אמן ואמן.

- א חסדי הוא.      ה' ה' י"ב.      ה' חסדי: ב'.      ה' דברי חסדים א' ה' ב'.  
 ב בראשית מ"ט.      ה' יחזקאל י"ז ב'.      ה' יחזקאל י"ז ב'.      ה' יחזקאל י"ז ב'.  
 ג תהלים מ"ח ה'.      ה' חגי ב' ב"ג.      ה' BA ב"ג.      ה' יחזקאל ל"ז ב"ה.  
 ד יעקב דוד מלך עליהם (יחזקאל ל"ז ב"ה).

## B. COMMENTARY OF AN ANONYMOUS RABBI

מורשים על דוח לר' יוסף קרא לרש"ם לרש"ם לר' מנחם בר חלב וראש פלני ז"ל

### בד"ש ז'

שפוט, לשון פעול. וידו בימי שפוט השופטים, לפי מלך  
 מלך לבני ישראל נבי' הדבר הזה שהיו שפטים על ידי רועים שופטים.  
 וידו בימי, וידו רעב, כך מוכיח בזה מקומות שבו כיוון חסדות,  
 והיו המים אשר חקת מן הארץ והיו לרש ביעשת: ר' של' וידו  
 בימי שפוט השופטים, בא הכחב ללמדך הארץ נהגלה הדבר  
 שאלמלך שבי' מלומי יסודת ובי' יבול לשה לבני מן הגולים שבשט  
 יסודת מה להם ששאו פוט מואבות ועל ידי שחגיגת רוח לשם  
 שנים מה פועל שחלום שילא ממה מלכות: ר' יוס'. וילך איש,  
 עשר גדול כי ופרס הדור ולא מפני ארץ העין שהיה עינו ארץ  
 בעניינים האלו לדוחקו לכך נעש: ר' של'. ולאו פשט כי לא  
 מפני ארץ העין ולא אלא מפני הרעב כמו שאלו ותשב משדה מואב,  
 כי שועה בשדה מואב כי פקד ד' את עמו להח להם לחם, אלא  
 מוכן שחפני הרעב ולא. בשדה מואב קפול"ש' בלע. אשרתים,  
 כך יקראים על שם מקומות בית לחם ואפרת אחת היא שחמר  
 ותקבר בדרך אפרת היא בית לחם. איש נעמי, בעלה של נעמי:  
 ר' של'. ויבית אלימלך, ללמדך אלו כי קיים לא כי מנה לבני  
 ששאו פוט נדרות: ר' יוס'. גם שנייה, כבר מה אלימלך ואחרי



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חסור לו ללחם חוץ לחמם בשבת אמרה לה לאשר חליני אלק, אסור לנו להחיות נקב עם זכר שאינה אשה של אמרה בלשון חליני אלק, עומי מובדלן בשש מאות ולשש עשרה מאות אמרה לה עומי עומי, אסור לנו ע"א אמרה לה ולאכך אלקי, ארבע מיתות נמסרו לבית דין אמרה לה בלשון חמיוני אמות, ושמי קברות מחולקין לבית דין אלה לסקלן ולסרפין ואסור לסרפין ולחמקן אמרה לה שם אקבר. בה יעשה ד' לי, כאשר הסמל להרע שנלש ידו בי להמית איש ולירד מנכסי, אם יפירד בני ויניק כי אם חמות, וחדל לדבר אלקי, מכאן אמרו אין מרבין עליו ואין מדקדקין עליו: רבי שלמה. וחרא בי מראצתא היא ללכת אחת, דברי רוח שלמה אל חפני בי לעובד לשב מאחרין וגו' אמרו על דברי עמי שמונה שובי אמרי 'במקד'. וחדל לדבר אלקי, כיון שראתה כי מחלמית היא ללכת לחם חלה מלומר לה שובי וקבלה עלי' להלויס עמה כמו שחפס וסלגנה שחיון עד בואה בית לחם. וידו כבואה בית לחם וחדום כל העיר עליהם והאמורה רואת נעמי, מלמד שחפסו פני נמי אוק העמים שערבו עלי' וחמרו עלי' לומר האת נעמי. והאמר אלקין קראו לי מרה, לאש שלמה ימי' בטוב ופנותי' בנעמיים. רחמי לקרות נעמי אכל לי אל חקלאן לי נעמי חילוף ויוס נעמיים. קראו לי מרה, פתוי' נפש מרה: ר' יוסי. וחדום, כמו ותהום, ולא יתכן לפרש שחממה העיר שלם כן ר' ליקדו ה' בפסח ותסס כמו ותסס ותקע ותלן וילך. הבור, לשון ספעל כמו הרע ספר: ר' שמו'. וריקם השיבוני, ריקם שם דבר הוא ומרמטון' בלש', וכן לא יראו פני ריקם שם דבר הוא. ור' עדה בי, פת' העיר בי, עומותי עמי בי, ממה שחפני ריקם כאלו העיר בי שמוותי סעו אלק וסלמתי מנעו סעו ממני. מסורת זה חפסו בידך כל מקום שחממ' בי' אסור עמי' הוא לשון שחמ', הני עמי בי, ועתה בי חקתי, לא חמסו בריעך, ולעשרה בס, ומקום שלא חממ' בי' הוא לשון עמי' כמו וכפס מעך יענה כך חממתי במחברת דונש. וחשב נעמי ורוח המואבי

כלהא עמיה, וסלג כזר נאמר למעלה וסלגה שחיון עד בואה בית לחם וזה לויך לומר עוד וסלג נעמי ורוח המואבי' אלא זה חסרתו משעס ששע נעמי ורוח המואבי' כלתה עמה אירע הדבר שכלו בית לחם בחמולת קייר שטוריס. ודרך זה חפסו בכל כ"ד ספורים בכל מקום שחממ' שכול דבר אחד שני פעמים, סרלשון לספר מעשה ושמי פתוי' ומשעס דבר זה אירע אחרי כן כך כמו שחמתי בסוף ספר שופטים וישב הכסף לאמו ונחש אחריו את אלק וממא הכסף לאמו. וספ פתרון מקרה השני שחפסו את אלק וממא הכסף לאמו אומר שש וסלג אמו מחמם כסף ומחממו לערף וגו', אף כאלו מפני שחפס לומר כי'אן סוקרס מקרה רוח חלקה השני לבוע סוקרד לבסול ולומר שחפסו לבית לחם ה' בחמולת קייר שטוריס:

## פרק י"ב

אשר אמצא רון בעיני, כך אמרה לה רוח להממה כל מי שולא ללקוט בשלם כל אחד ואחד מוסן עמי בשש קרובי איש אחד חסר וסמי אין לי חסר אלא אלק לי אחר אדם אשר אממ' סן בעיני סקלגלי ללקוט בשש של. ויקר מקרה, כך אירע חממה שחוקרה לה לבוא בחלקה השש לבוע: ר' יוסי. ויאמר לקוצרים ד' עבבם, מכאן ליימחו רעוסי' דרך ארץ ואינו פשוט. העב על הקוצרים, שחיס עומד עליסם לורס בנלממס: ר' שמו'. ויאמר בוע לער העב על הקוצרים לבני דעברה רואת, מנסג העולם כל מי שבור כרמו לו קולר שורס עמיר ממוס אחד שלא יתסס אדם נכרי ליתסס בחרן שורס בשש קיירס כי אש שורס סקורב אלו וסבב בוע לא שאל על נערה סכרות שח' מפיר ולא גער בנערו סלג על סקוריס על מה סיסס אופן סערות ללקוט אלא על רוח שחמיות בעיני סכרי'





## פרשת ד' /

וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה שָׁבָה פֶּה פְּלוּנֵי אֱלֹמֹנִי, פִּתְרִי יָם לִי לְגִלּוֹת  
לְךָ כִּדְבַר עֲמֹן וּמִכְסֵּס, וְדוֹמָה לִּי אֶל מִקּוֹם פְּלוּנֵי אֱלֹמֹנִי תִּתְּנִי

כִּי־אִם כֹּלָה, עַד שִׁכְלָה הָאִישׁ אֶת דְּבָרִי

לו ממחר תחמי עניך בלחוד מן הצחורות ותיעטלי לו שרזה אשה בצבורי  
לל מוקן עשיר אבל עבטיו נחבדר הדבר שלא בלח אלה לשם שמים  
לסתגור. כי יודע כל שער עמי כי אשת חיל את, פתרי ים  
אדם שומא אשה ממשפחה ובוס ומחנה בם מפני ממשפחה אבל  
חמי אס אשא לוקך חמי מחנה כך אלה מחבד ומחשבר כך כי  
יודע כל שער עמי כי אשת חיל את ואשת חיל עטרת בעלה: ר'  
יוסי, פובני, יוקר מומי: ר' שני. לני הלילה וה' בבקר אב  
ינאלך טוב ונאל, פתרי אס ינאלך נולל נקרב ממני טרי טוב ינאל.  
ויאמר אל יודע, מוכב על ותקוס בערס יכר וגו' הוא יורה  
לקוס כי אמר אין כבודי שודע כי בלס כאלס נגון. הבני, נמו  
הבס נחמנה לו. הבטפחה, טלית. שש שעורים, שס מדות  
שעורים במידס סונלס ורגל בעיר. ורמבר מי את בחי, פתרי  
מס מלסח בחי, וכן ויבולו לל סהיס וילמחו מי לסח שפתרו מם  
מלסחס. ורמבר שש השעורים האלה נקן לי כי אמר אלי אל  
לכוסס. ורמבר שש השעורים האלה נקן לי כי אמר אלי אל  
חבואי ריקס אל חבואך, שלס תלמר מם לודך לך בשס השעורים  
מלסר סכסוקי לישא לוקך סרי כל אשר לו בידך לכך סוקך לפיש  
לל לערי נמן לי אלה כי אמר אלי אל חבואי ריקס אל חבואך.  
ורמבר שבי בחי, מחמי. כי לא ישקט האיש, אמר ששבע  
לך ללוח סדבר צבקר. כי אם כלה, עד שכלה האיש את דבר  
סוים אשר דבר צועו אל רוח:

(א) אולי צ"ל אף היתה.

חרומו לאחר כמי ועומר, אשר צית משרעל. פלוני, כמו כי יעלה  
ממך דבר וחרמונו ארי יתנני. אלהוני, לשון אלא ששחק  
סדבר ולא נהלה עד סוים. ואני אמרתי אנלה אונך לאמר  
וירעה כי אין וולך לגאול ואנבי אחרך, פסרנו ולדעס שאין  
ולך קרוב אחר לגאול כי אס אי, אי קרוב אחרך יוקר מל  
קרובי לצימלך. ביום קנודך השרה ביד נעמי ומיד רות הוצאבי  
אשת רבות קנית, פתרי אס רלשי' לגאול את סדס מיד אמו  
אס לא סקנו בחסלה מיד נעמי ומיד רות חמאבי אשת סמ  
סל אשר לצימלך וכל אשר לעיון ומחלן משועבדים לסחוסס  
בחתובס ולין קרקעו סלסן יקנין אלה למי סיקס את רות  
חמאבי' לו ללסס כדי לסקס סס סמח על נחלסו, סל מי שיעבר  
אל סדס וסל למי סדס ו' יעבסו סל איס פלוי סח וילמר  
והלס סל מחלן כי יעברו סח סל את אלהנו מלס סס סמח  
מכר על נחלסו. פן אישורח את נחלסו, לני יסל לגאול סלס  
ו' אס לא אמור את נחלסו ולני רלס לססח את נחלסו כדי  
לגאול נחלס סחוס. שלך איש נעלו נקן לרעו, מם שדורח  
סלל עכסו קונין בקנין בדיס סו דורח סרלסו קנין  
על ידי סלף איס נעלו נקן לרעו. וזאת התעודה בישראל,  
סקנין סח ערוס ציטרל. סלמר שמעדין עדיס ססקס לו בקנין  
אין לסר קנין כלס חרעומו. לקקס שם רבות על נחלסו ולס  
יכר שם רבות וגו', כל אדס משרלל אפי רמוק סלל כי נקרוני  
ללימך וס' קניס את רות חמאבי' לו ללסס וגס כי קניס את  
סדס מיד נעמי אפי' ק' מ'קניס סס סמח על נחלסו לפיסקרקעו  
משועבדים לכחובס אבל מעס אמו ומשער מקונו כי נכר סס  
סמח, אבל עכסו ששל את רות חמאבי' אשת מחלן אחר מקרובי  
ללימך לא יכר סס סמח מעס אמו ומשער מקונו. כרחל

ובלוא אשר בנו שחורש וגו', מה רלו הוקים להזכיר אשר בנו  
 שחוסן את בית ישראל בזמן אלא רלו בשאמר לו בוש לגולל לגולל  
 את השדה ה' מוזמן לגולל ויזמר אכי אגל כשחור בשו וחזר לו  
 ביום קיווקן השדה מיד נעמי וחלת רוח המואבי' אשת המה קית  
 להקים שם המה על מחלו השיבו הגולל לו לוול לגולל לי פן  
 אשחית את נחלתי הבני הוקים שאני מסרב לגולל אלא משני רוח  
 המואבי' שגאלי ה' לו לקחתה לפיכך אמרו לו הוקים ימן ד' את  
 האשה הבאה אל ביקך כרסל וכלאה אשר גו החוסן את בית ישראל,  
 רסל ולאה עובדי ע"ז היו בא יעקב וגיר אחס ונסאו ובנו שחוס  
 את בית ישראל, ולא עוד אלא זקינו פרץ ילא מחמר, וכל משפחתיו  
 ילאה מחמר אף אחס את אחס נושא את רוח המואבי' אין אחס  
 מחנה בה, ימי רלן שיקן ד' את האשה הבאה אל ביקך כרסל  
 וכלאה. ועשה דיל באפרהיה, פתח' שלל המלכות מן הורע אשר  
 ימן ד' לך מן העשרה הולת, שאין היל האמור כאן אלא מלכות כענין  
 שנאמר בשלל ועש חיל. וקרא שם בבית לחם, ימי רלן שחוליד  
 בן ויקרל בו שמך. שם האמור כאן הוא בן כמו והכרתי לבבל שם  
 ושאר מן וזכר, שם האמור בכל כ"ד ספרים הוא בן, ויקרל בהם  
 שמי. ויקרא שמו בישראל, וימי רלן שחוקים בעולם שיראה  
 ורע ויארך ימים. והי לך למשיבת נפש ולכלכל את שיבוך,  
 ואם מאמר רוח ילדש ועמי אף ימי למשיבת נפש לכך נאמר אשר  
 להבדק ילדשו. והקראנה שמו עובד, לומר זה יבא עובד את נעמי  
 ומכלל את שיבתה. ואלה חולדות פרץ, מה ראה הכתוב לייחס  
 כאן חולדת פרץ אלא למדך שבטל שבה רוח להכות חתת כנפי  
 השמיים ילאה מחנה מלכות הלק שחפרה ביומו: ר' יוסי. ואלה  
 חולדות פרץ, לפי שייחס את דוד על שמה של רוח המואבי' חור  
 וייחסו על שם יחורם: רבנא של מיה:

ס' ל' ק

## פי' המיוחס לקמחי

## אתחיל פירוש רות

א ויהי בימי שפוט השופטים. כהניו מתעוררים ישראל על ידי  
השופטים קודם שמלך שאול והיה זה בימי אבנן ואמר ר' אל אבנן זה בועז :  
וילך איש. הלך מחמת הרעב כדאמרין רעב בעד טור דגליך :  
ב אפרתים. על שם המדינה עקרת אפרתה : ד נשים כוונות. ונתגדו :  
יב בני אסרת ייש לי תקוה. וגם אמרתי יש לי תקוה בהריון :  
יג הלהן תשברנה. בתמי' : תעגנה. מלשון רכותיני משום עבונה :

ז זה שבתה הבית מעט. אשר מעט היא יושבת בבית אלה מודרות ללקט  
ולחולץ לחמותה : יג לא אהיה כאחת שפחותיך. איני קשובה אשילו  
כאחת משפחותיך : יד ויצבט. אין לו דומה ועתדו לפי ענינו  
לשון לקיטה : יו וגם של תשלול לה. עשו עמיכס כאלו אתם  
שוכחים צבתים עומדים קטנים מלשון וצל הכרזל. צבתים אין לו דומה טברי יג' ה'  
במקרה אלה במשנה מעין צבתים או כדוכות :

כ זורה את הגורן. האץ ערבילדי בלעו. ז הערמה. כמו ערמת שיר' ב'.  
קטום : ח וילפת. כמו וילפת שמשון שפדונו ויחזו גם זה אחז את איבריו שופט' י' כט  
תגלו כהם המתקדש : ט וברשת בגפיק. והשאת לחשה להקיס ודע  
לעלי : כי גואל אתה. לבחול נחלת איש כמו ש' זכא גואלו הקרוב יקר' כה' כה'  
הלוי וכן התורה לא יהיה חייב כי הם לבחול נחלת קרובו אבל לישא אשתו  
ולקיים לו זרע לא היה חייב אלא מענה היה להם לכל אדם שימות בלא  
בנים ולא היה להם חז' לביא את אשתו היה הולך קרובו שאינו ערוה לאשתו  
ונשא אותה ומק' ס' לו ודע בדרך היבם והיו מקיימים ומחזיקים במנהג זה  
במחנות יבום שהיא מן התורה : יב קרוב טכני. והוא מותר ל' והוא  
הוא לבחול קודם ממני : טו הבי הבטפתה. טי' המטפתה :  
טז שש שיעורים. שש קאים שיעורים :

א פלוגי אלמוני. מטען שאינו מוכר ומגלה שמו אומ' עליו פלוגי  
אלמוני. והוא מלשון בי יפלא ממך דבר. אלמוני כמו עלמוני כלומ'  
ששמו עלום ומכסה שלא נודע : ה ויאמר בעז ביום קנותך סיד.  
הלוקח אותה עדין לקעתה כמו כן מיד נעמי אמר דות המואביה אשת המת  
ולישא אותה לחשה כרי להקיס שם למת כי אין רועס בענין אחר אלא למי  
שנוה לבחול יקיס שם לחזיו : ו פן אשחית נחלתי. להיות לי בבית  
אחר שתים נשים עדות זו לזו : ז וזאת לפניך בישראל. דברי השער  
חס' שאומרים כך היה מענה לו בישראל : על הגאולה. זו מכירה :  
ועל התמורה. ונחלישין : שלף איש נעלו. והו קנין כמו שאנו קונים  
בקורד. געלו שליף גיוטנו בלעו : וזאת התעודה. זאת התורה וזה  
המשפט היה ענה בישראל :

דברי י' ח'  
ומת

אולי קו'  
אולי מר

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## 2. Persons

### (a) Early Rabbis

(with biographical notes)

Abba b. Kahana	261, 273f	Eleazar	137f, 140, 226
Palestinian amora, late third century.		Eleazar b. Shammua (ca. 150), tanna, a pupil of Akiva.	
Aha	242	Eleazar b. Jose	262
*Palestinian amora, fourth century.		son of Jose b. Halafta, tanna, second century.	
Alexander	262	Hanan b. Raba	136
Two Palestinian amoraim of this name are known but it is impossible to assign dates to them.		* Babylonian amora, third cent.	
ben Nehemiah	284	Hanina	140, 264
Unidentified		* A Palestinian halakhist and haggadist who died ca. 250.	
Berekiah	246, 273, 279	Hasa	274
Palestinian amora, fourth century.		* Babylonian amora, third cent.	
		Hiyya	133
		* Hiyya Rabbah, tanna, end of second century.	



- Hiyya b. Abba 217  
Amora, third and early fourth centuries. He was born in Babylon but migrated to Palestine and studied under Johanan, Joshua b. Levi, and Eleazar.
- Huna 251  
Babylonian amora, born ca. 216 and died 296/7. President of the academy at Sura for more than forty years.
- Johanan 229f, 242, 245, 248  
Johanan b. Nappaha (ca. 180 - ca. 279), Palestinian amora and founder of the academy at Tiberias.
- Jose 204  
Jose b. Halapta, tanna, mid-second century, pupil of Akiva.
- Joshua 248  
Probably the son of Akiva, a tanna, mid-second century, who probably died in the Hadrianic persecutions.
- Joshua b. Korhah 217  
Tanna, mid-second century. Identified by some with Joshua, son of Akiva.
- Joshua b. Levi 142, 240, 251, 255, 284  
Palestinian amora, first half of the third century.
- Judah 142, 145, 234, 246  
Judah b. Ilai, mid-second century tanna. Judah ha-Nasi was one of his pupils.
- Judah b. Hanina 262  
Palestinian amora, third century.
- Judah b. Simon 135, 137  
Judah b. Simeon b. Pazzi, Palestinian amora and haggadist, late third and early fourth centuries.
- Judan b. Pazzi 262  
The same Judah b. Simeon b. Pazzi.
- Levi 133, 234, 280  
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